

THE RECORD CONNOISSEUR'S MAGAZINE

25¢

# THE AMERICAN MUSIC LOVER

AUGUST, 1939

*Articles by* — BENIAMINO GIGLI - ULYSSES WALSH

*Portrait* — BENIAMINO GIGLI

RECORD NOTES & REVIEWS - OVERTONES

TECHNICAL NOTES - SWING MUSIC NOTES - ETC.



*Edited by*  
PETER HUGH REED

TWENTY-FIVE CENTS THE COPY



# THE AMERICAN MUSIC LOVER

Volume V, No. 4

AUGUST, 1939



<i>Page</i>	<i>By</i>
118	An Italian Tenor Reminiscences ..... Beniamino Gigli
122	Cut in Wax — Some Notes on Len Spencer ..... Ulysses Walsh
129	The Music Shelf
130	Record Collectors' Corner ..... Julian Morton Moses
131	Technical Topics ..... Robert S. Lanier
133	Overtones
135	Editorial Notes
139	Record Notes and Reviews
152	Swing Music Notes ..... Enzo Archetti
154	In the Popular Vein ..... Horace Van Norman

Published by THE AMERICAN MUSIC LOVER, General Offices: 12 East 22nd Street, New York

- Peter Hugh Reed, Editor; Philip Miller, Associate Editor; Paul Girard, Circulation Manager.
- Published monthly on the first, The American Music Lover sells at twenty-five cents a copy in the U. S. A.; yearly subscription \$2.50, in Canada and all foreign countries \$3.00. Entered as Second Class Matter, June 5, 1939, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y. under the Act of March 3, 1879. Its contents are protected by copyright and may not be reprinted without permission in writing. No responsibility is assumed for unsolicited contributions; and in no case will they be returned unless accompanied by a stamped and self-addressed envelope. A month's notice is necessary in the change of an address. (Copyright 1939 by Peter Hugh Reed.)

Frontispiece: Prominent Musical Personalities — Past and Present

No. 22 — BENIAMINO GIGLI

# AN ITALIAN TENOR REMINISCES

## AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

BENIAMINO GIGLI\*

**W**HEN I LOOK BACK AND REMEMBER the road that I traveled from the Ricreatorio of Recanati to La Scala, I cannot dispel a curious feeling that I am, perhaps, living in a dream and that suddenly that dream will end and I shall find myself again what I was when I fell asleep: the son of the bell ringer of Recanati Cathedral, an altar-boy, and a singer in the Schola Cantorum of Maestro Quirino Lazzarini, affectionately called by the people of the village "the canary of the belfry" because he loved to ascend, on calm May nights, to the belfry and there, beneath the bells, sing among the frightened swallows.

Each of us carries with him throughout his life impressions of childhood days. My childhood is fragrant with incense; illuminated by the mild light of candles before an altar; melodious with prayer sung by a choir in the shadows whence there came also the deep, mysterious sound of the organ. The Cathedral was the center of my life in those far off years. They had early discovered in me an attractive contralto voice, and Maestro Quirino Lazzarini, who had instituted a school for young singers for the church, wanted me among them. They say that my singing won for me the immediate affection of all who heard me. Among those small white voices, it seemed that mine vibrated with unusual sonority, carried longer, and detached itself from all the others to soar above them. I had but a vague sensation of all this. I was happy when singing because up to then singing had been the very light of my soul, but I was far from imagining that it was to become my destiny.

Every Sunday afternoon we boys met in the Ricreatorio to rehearse very innocent,

primitive spectacles. They were just dramas in miniature. My brother Abraham, then very near his time to be ordained, was our "director". It was he who taught and rehearsed us. Ingenuous and childish rehearsals, of course, with burnt cork, and wigs, and whiskers of corn silk. But the public came to our presentations and it was those first contacts with hardly a hundred spectators, on the minute stage of the Ricreatorio, which accustomed me to the theatre, which gave me that familiarity with the stage that certainly guided my first steps in my life as an artist.

In the meantime that small contralto voice, which rang out from behind the big altar of the Cathedral during ceremonies, was beginning to acquire local fame. In nearby towns they were beginning to talk of the "little contralto of Recanati" as a singing wonder. But in Recanati they were already familiar with my singing. For I sang in the streets, on my way home, when I left home in the morning, when I helped my father pull the bell ropes, when I helped the druggist fold sheets of paper to pack magnesia; until finally without my knowing it or even without my wanting it, it became known that news of my voice had reached even to Macerata, the "capital" of our province of Marche.

This incident would hardly have been of any importance if it had not marked my first authentic debut. The university students of that city decided to present, for charitable purposes, a lively spectacle: the operetta *La fuga di Angelica*, which had been transcribed by the Florentine master, Alessandro Billi, and which had already been given with some success at Siena. But they found themselves up against an insurmountable obstacle. No student or girl of Macerata dared to assume the part of the leading lady, a girl who allows herself to be ravished for love of a student of her professor-father's. No student had the courage to bring himself to don a woman's gown over his trousers and to present himself

\*This article, freely translated from the Italian by Enzo Archetti, originally appeared in "La Lettura" of Milan.

on the stage to speak and sing in falsetto. Suddenly a student slapped a palm to his forehead. By Bacchus! A few Sundays ago, at the Church of San Flaviano in Recanati, he had heard in the choir a melodious, angelic, white voice (the adjectives are not mine!), a voice, in fact, just exactly right for the part of Angelica. A committee of students hurried to Recanati, made inquiries, and then descended on me at home — laughing, imploring, anxious.

I was living with my mother and my brother Abraham, who had become a priest. Imagine the consternation of the three of us on hearing the proposal of those students. The very thought that an innocent boy of the Schola Cantorum should disguise himself as a girl to be supposedly ravished in a part on a stage of an actual theatre of a "big" city was like profanity. And yet, so persuasive were those students that they convinced first Maestro Lazzarini and then the three of us. I left for Macerata.

What a singular debut! I can still see myself looking into a mirror, dismayed, just before going on the stage: a long, white gown, a waist with wide sleeves as was the custom then, a velvet cap with two white flowers on top of an abundant glossy brown wig, a parasol of blue silk. The transformation was perfect. I may add that then I was slim but well rounded, with cheeks still innocent of any beard. In fact, from a distance and underneath artificial lights I could pass as a . . . fairly good Angelica. For the sake of the record, I must say that my contralto voice was well liked. For a while the little "capital" spoke of nothing else but that show. But, more important, it was that show that marked my destiny.

#### A FRIENDLY COOK

Each summer there came to Recanati to spend their vacations the entire Portuguese Seminary of Rome and among them was their cook, Giovanni Zerri, an enthusiast for the lyric theatre. He met me, heard my voice, and from then on never ceased urging me to study and predicting for me with fantastic and fascinating eloquence a wonderful future. To his urging was added the applause of Macerata. Well, a few months after the episode of Angelica, I found myself in Rome with my brother Catervo, who was studying sculpture at the Academy.

Usually, because of a physical law, the white contralto voice becomes, upon maturity, a tenor voice, just as the white soprano voices on maturing become baritones or basses. Quite

naturally, then, my voice became a limpid, ringing tenor. When I went to Rome I nurtured the hope of becoming a member of the Schola Cantorum there, which was directed by Don Lorenzo Perosi. In fact, on that hope was pinned the solution of the problem of how I was to subsist. Unfortunately, only youths of fifteen were admitted to Don Perosi's school and I was already three years older than that. Hence I was forced to seek other means to exist. I found them first with a pharmacist, and then in the photographic bureau of the Ministry of Education. We were lodged, my brother Catervo and I, in a little room high up under the roof at Number 25, Passeggiata di Ripetta, in a room I remember with affection every time I sing *La Bohème*. Its only comforts were the beautiful Roman sky and our youthful confidence. Our work was not always sufficient to guarantee us our supper and then the good Zerri would come to our aid by lowering to me through the stair-well a napkin-full of the remains of the seminary students' supper. With that under my arm I would run back to our room, singing as I mounted the stairs.

#### SOME FRIENDLY NEIGHBORS

In this same house there also lived Leonido Bissolati and the sculptor Zanelli. I often met them on the stairs where they stopped me and with sincere interest asked me about my voice. That always made me wild with joy. Sometimes I dined on only that joy and nothing else! I'd face a window — so big — looking out over the roofs and sing a song or a romance for each "dish", which, frankly speaking, I should much rather have had to eat.

And yet I am happy that I did suffer hunger, cold, and poverty then. For it was my schooling. I learned about life and men. They taught me the durability of humanity, the necessity of a spiritual life, and the incomparable beauty of goodness. What matter riches and glory? What good are all the triumphs when within one's breast there is no heart that beats or feels? Some day my voice will cease, its vibrations will be gone, its sonority broken. What would remain of me, aside from a few discs, if I did not leave some mark on humanity? I am a man among men, a living heart among living hearts. It is necessary that a good memory of me as a man remain if my life is to be worthwhile.

To return to Rome: after many attempts I succeeded in being admitted to the Saint Cecilia school for singing under Maestro Rosati. Of course, there was a scholarship to

help open the doors. Here I studied two years — with great profit. My voice matured, grew sounder, more flexible. It became really what it was called — a tenor voice.

But what opened the doors of the theatre to me was the competition held in Parma in 1914. The eminent maestro, Cleofonte Campanini, and an intelligent American philanthropist, Mrs. Elizabeth MacCormick, had devised a singularly interesting contest for students of all nationalities in the most musical city in all Italy — Parma. A formidable jury of maestri and famous singers were to test the contestants and to point out the most worthy to the lyric theatres of the world. I hurried to Parma. It was the month of July. Parma, with its aristocratic, quiet streets, its regal palaces, and its churches, was aflutter with excitement, like the antechamber of a Conservatory on examination day. One hundred and five young singers were competing: thirty-two tenors, nineteen baritones, six basses, forty sopranos, six mezzo-sopranos, and two contraltos. From every window — wide open because of the heat — there poured forth snatches of romances, trills, and scale-passages. All evening and into the early hours of morning, the entire city seemed to be a singing school. The committee sat in a hall of the Conservatory. Each singer had to sing three pieces; therefore the committee had to listen to about three hundred arias and romances. Every once in a while those poor judges, sweating and puffing, would come out to get a breath of fresh air in the beautiful courtyard of the palace and there they would have huge glasses of beer brought to them. I watched them with a fear that approached anguish, and I saw them drink with a desire that was painful. But beer was expensive for me. They were reimbursing only expenses, 151 lire as I still remember, so it was necessary to watch every penny. My turn eventually arrived. I sang first an aria from Reyer's *Sigurd*, then *O Paradiso* from *L'Africana*, and after that the final scene from *Traviata*. Among the tenors I came out first. At those same examinations, two others distinguished themselves: Francesco Merli and Fagoaga.

#### AFTER MANY YEARS

A short time ago I was again in Parma and a friend gave me a precious gift: Schedule Number 75 (my number) of that contest with the annotations of the judges. The annotations read:

Name: Gigli Beniamino, of Recanati.  
Age: 24.

*Figure*: good.

*Intensity of voice*: strong tenor, decidedly lyric.

*Timbre*: warm, sympathetic.

*Intonation*: excellent.

*Range*: complete.

*Interpretations*: warm, expressive, very efficient.

*Maximum Number of Points*: nine.

But underneath, in large letters in blue pencil, there was this note: "We have at last found the tenor!"

News of that contest traveled quickly and three months after that examination an impresario offered me my first engagement, as Enzo in *La Gioconda* at the Sociale of Rovigo.

A singer may forget everything, but never the night of his debut. I still see myself seated in the modest dressing room of the Sociale, waiting to be called on stage. My heart is in my mouth and around my throat is a tight iron band. I feel that I shall never be able to sing. With me is a friend who is supposed to encourage me, but he is trembling worse than I. Years of hunger, privations, dreams have finally led to the footlights but who could assure me that this would not end in disaster? They had told me that my *Cielo e mar* was perfect but would I be able to sing it with the orchestra as I had always done alongside a piano? I try to clear my throat and I attempt a phrase at mezza-voce. It won't come! It won't come! That infernal band of iron is tightening, tightening. . . . My friend asks in a frightened whisper:

"How do you feel?"

I reply with barely half a whisper:

"Badly. Bring me a cup of coffee. I cannot seem to breathe."

#### ON THE STAGE

My friend jumps from his chair and rushes out. Through the open door I see him collide with a fireman and almost send him spinning to the floor. But I cannot await his return. Someone comes who says: "Tenor Gigli, on the stage." I move as if in a dream and enter on the scene through a crowd that fills the San Marco plaza of painted paper and canvas. It is my turn. Silently I pray for help. I open my mouth. The voice pours forth as if it were independent of me, my fears, my will, or my life. I actually hear my voice rise apart from me, limpid, without effort, precise, as if it was being drawn out by the orchestra . . .

My friend returns, panting, with the cup of coffee. He hears me singing, sees me

through the scenery, opens his eyes wide in astonishment, and the cup of coffee crashes to the floor. But I smile. I have victory clutched in my fist.

Later came fame. But that is history that interests less. An artist who has realized the dreams of his youth remembers above everything the hard experiences and the bitter years that preceded them. Those experiences may teach something to the young, they might comfort them, persuade them to hold tight, to believe. Faith: that is what wins over every obstacle and makes every sacrifice worthwhile. I never seriously doubted my fate. Against the bitterness, delusions, and hardships, I always fought with that profound religious sense instilled in me by my mother when I was a child: a serene faith in the essential goodness of life. Besides this, I have always loved my mission as an artist and I have always been proud of my labors.

#### THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE ARTIST

A singer must always be conscious of the responsibility that has been placed on him. Italian, born from the people, raised in the fear of God and in the belief of my adored country, I have always felt, even from the beginning of my career, that there had been entrusted to me, as to all my fellow-artists, a stupendous tradition: that of Song, the glory of our land. I have always felt that my voice was not mine but that it belonged, in however small a way, to the spiritual patrimony of my country and my people. So I should have broken faith with my most sacred duty if I had not defended myself against all irregularities and vain squandering of energy. The life of an artist must always be severely and rigorously watched. Woe to him who does not know how or does not want to administer wisely his own life and thereby wastes it. He breaks faith with himself, which is bad, and he breaks faith with his country, which is worse.

Of my two children, Rina and Enzo, Rina has been blessed by nature with an instinct for music. The people of Milan realized this when they applauded her on March 17, 1937 at the Teatro Lirico when my little one insisted upon staying at my side at the concert

for the Journalists' Syndicate. But I see her in the not too distant future that which she surely will be: a beautiful bride and a good mother, as her mother always was.

Enzo is studying scientific farming and even though he may sing all day, he gives no indication that nature has blessed him in any way musically. One evening, for example, when I was to sing in *Rigoletto*, I took him with me to the theatre. When the opera was over I asked him whether he was pleased with his father. He replied quite candidly that in all the opera the only thing he liked was . . . the storm in the last act.

"But my *Donna è mobile*?"

"Yes, Papa . . . but that storm! It really looked as if it were raining on the stage . . . And the wind and the thunder and the lightning . . . How beautiful!"

I have sometimes been asked from whom I inherited my voice. I don't know, but I think it was from my mother. Every evening when I was very young, before putting me to bed, she made me sing a little folk tune:

*S'io fossi una formica  
queste mura vorrei varcar,  
le varcherei senza paura,  
la mia bella a riveder . . .*

At this point she took up the song with a small, sweet, melodious voice:

*La mia mamma è una contessa,  
il babbo è un cavalier.*

And then we two together, her head against mine, an arm around my shoulders:

*Ed io povera meschinella  
son rinchiusa in monaster.*

She seemed like an angel when she sang and I often told her so with tears in my eyes, so touched was I. To which my mother would reply:

"Yes, when I was young; not now anymore. You are the angel now and you have a good voice. Now it's your turn to sing, my darling . . . But remember that to sing well one must have a great heart and love much, much, and everyone . . ."

I have always tried, I still try, to obey my mother.

# GRAMOPHONIANA

## 2. CUT IN WAX - SOME NOTES ON LEN SPENCER

ULYSSES WALSH

### I.

**M**ORE THAN A CENTURY AGO, CONSUMPTIVE John Keats, about to die, gloomily suggested that his grave-stone should bear the inscription:

"Here lies one whose name was writ in water."

He was wrong, of course. No literate adult today needs be told who Keats was or why his name lives.

Less than a quarter of a century ago, the late Leonard Garfield Spencer\* also was about to die, but it undoubtedly did not occur to him to paraphrase Keats and ask that the stonecutter chisel upon his tomb: "Here lies one whose name was cut in wax."

Spencer wasn't consumptive and didn't know he was about to die. He was buoyant and endlessly self-confident and, though scratchings on wax are easily obliterated, his voice, engraved on that fragile material, had traveled to all parts of the world. Probably he imagined it would continue so to echo "down through the last syllable of recorded time."

Yet today, so almost forgotten is the man who at one time may have been Washington, D. C.'s, most famous native son, that some explanation of who and what he was appears necessary. To begin with, let it be said that Len Spencer was the first man whose voice

\*What did Mr. Spencer look like? Our readers will undoubtedly be interested. Believe it or not, no picture of him could be found either in Camden at the R.C.A. Victor offices or in New York. The Music Section of the New York Public Library discovered a tiny medallion-picture in an old Victor catalogue, dating from 1912. Less than an inch high and badly blurred, it could not be reproduced. However, from it we gathered that he possessed a round, full face, and a Beethovenish head of hair. Editor.

was heard, reciting Scripture and repeating the Lord's Prayer, at his own funeral.

### II.

One cold day in December, 1914, fifty or more people had gathered in the chapel of a New York funeral home. Suddenly the group, standing with bowed heads at the conclusion of the formal funeral services, was swept by a stir of surprise. All listened intently as, strong, clear and musical but with a touch of theatrical effect, the deceased's voice was heard, intoning the Lord's Prayer. A few moments later that same voice which, during its owner's lifetime, had been loved by millions of people who had never seen him in the flesh, began repeating the sonorous phrases of the Twenty-Third Psalm:

"The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want . . ."

It was a breath-taking moment, made even more so by being the first of its kind in history. Before the final words, "and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever," had been distinctly uttered, nearly every hearer was in tears. There seems some question as to whether the Spencer record was played in a funeral home or the Little Church Around the Corner. Billy Murray quotes Ada Jones, who attended the services, as saying they were in the church, and she was obliged to twist her handkerchief to keep from screaming as she heard her partner's voice.

But some of those who had known the dead man intimately must have reflected that it was just like Len Spencer to have left in his will a clause providing that phonograph records of his own voice reciting his favorite portions of the Bible, which had long been good sellers for the various talking machine companies, should be played at his funeral.

Len, they well knew, could always be counted on to do the dramatic and unexpect-

ed. Even the pupils who had attended the Spencerian business college in Washington years before had found that out.

### III.

The fact that Leonard Garfield Spencer's personality was one of the most striking of his day may be best accounted for, perhaps, by heredity, especially from his mother's side. Spencer's father was by no means a nonentity, but Sara Andrew Spencer was one of the notable women of her generation.

Outstanding facts of Mrs. Spencer's life may be found in the 1908 edition of "Who's Who in America," published a few years before her death. From this it is learned that she was then, as she had been for many years previously, principal of the Spencerian business college in Washington; that she was born in Savona, New York, in 1837, and married Henry C. Spencer in 1864. (Mr. Spencer died in 1890.) After moving to Washington she became interested in the fight for woman suffrage and joined 72 other women in an attempt to register and vote in 1871. Refused, she brought suit with the result that the Supreme Court ruled in 1874 that women were citizens but could not vote without local enabling legislation.

Though disappointed in reforming the election laws, Mrs. Spencer continued her efforts to improve the world—especially Washington. A tireless worker in the cause of redeeming "street walkers," she was credited with defeating bills to license red light districts in the capital city, and secured passage by the District of Columbia legislature in the early '70's of a bill for the rescue of outcast girls. She was secretary of the National Woman Suffrage Association from 1874 to 1881; president of the Woman Franchise Association of the District of Columbia from 1871 to 1876; served as secretary of the district auxiliary association of the American Red Cross from 1877 to 1882 and held a great many other positions of distinction.

Workers in the cause of "equal rights" whose memories go back more than half a century may recall that Sara Spencer drew up "the Woman's Declaration of Rights" and, with Susan B. Anthony and three other women, presented it to the officers of the centennial celebration of the Declaration of Independence at Philadelphia on July 4, 1876. She was also the first woman to address a national presidential convention. At the Republican convention of 1876 she asked for a plank in the platform pledging the party to prohibit disfranchisement on account of sex.

Later she wrote two books, "The Woman Question" and "Thirty Lesson in the English Language".

All told, a remarkable woman. No wonder Sara Andrew Spencer produced a remarkable son.

### IV.

Of Len's father, less seems to be known—chiefly because his life was comparatively short. He was, however, a son of the inventor of the Spencerian system of penmanship, for a generation or two the most popular method of "muscular movement" handwriting in America, and one that was taught to millions of school boys and girls—some of whom, like the writer of this sketch, were merely tormented without ever being able to acquire it. After his marriage he and his wife operated the Spencerian business college at 9th and D streets, Washington. For a number of years the Spencers had living quarters in the building, which later became the Lincoln theater, then the Herzog. It was burned while known under the second name, and a movie theater stands on the site today.

### V.

Len Spencer and his brother, Henry, were born in 1869, five years after the marriage of their parents. The former was christened, as has already been indicated, Leonard Garfield Spencer, his middle name being given in honor of Senator James A. Garfield of Ohio who, long before he became President of the United States, was an intimate friend of Mr. and Mrs. Spencer. Henry, usually known as Harry, was named for his father.

As the Spencer boys grew up they adhered to the convention that twins must look alike, dress alike and act alike. There seems to have been more than a touch of the Katzenjammer Kids about them. Odell Whipple, well-known Washingtonian, who was a pupil in the business college more than fifty years ago, has recalled that "not even the other students could tell Len and Harry apart. They would go to the blackboard and go through a regular drill, making the same strokes together. My father... sent me to the college in the hope that I would overcome my unfortunate left-handedness. Mrs. Spencer was also trying to cure Len of this 'vicious' habit... In Len's case the desired result was obtained, for he afterwards wrote in the beautiful flowing hand of his family."

Many years later W. E. Shea, assistant to Mark Sullivan, and his sister, Miss Mabel

Shea (Mr. Sullivan's secretary), attended the Spencerian college. Mr. Shea recalls Mrs. Spencer as "the original bobbed-haired woman" and as having had a withering power of sarcasm in calling attention to students' shortcomings. Miss Shea admits having been very much afraid of the impressive lady.

As Len and Harry grew up, however, they appear to have stood in no particular awe of Sara Spencer or anyone else. Their practical jokes, of which their mother was occasionally the victim, have become legendary among surviving students.

When Len's "vicious" left-hand habit had been remedied, he was gradually inducted into the regimen of the college. In his late teens he became an assistant instructor. Occasionally he earned a bit of pocket money by writing handsome visiting cards for callers.

#### VI.

At first thought it seems there would be much of a connection between the business college and the crude and highly imperfect phonograph Thomas Edison had invented in 1877, but there turned out to be one. For ten years or more Edison paid little attention to his sound-reproducing device, but in the late '80's there was a revival of interest in its possibilities, both as a means of entertainment and as an adjunct to business. Tainter and Bell, two Washington experimenters, mastered a system of recording on wax cylinders instead of tinfoil such as had been used by Edison, and the result was the American Graphophone company, with the Columbia Phonograph company as its sales agent.

Frank Dorian, who was associated with Columbia almost from its beginning and remained with it most of his next forty years, recalls:

"The Columbia company started business in January, 1889, in two rooms in the Gunton building on Louisiana avenue, facing Fifth Street. Some time in the summer of the same year it rented the four story and basement brownstone front building at 627 E Street. It remained there until some time in 1893, at which time it moved to 919 Pennsylvania Avenue, a large building which had formerly housed a dry goods store . . . It was at 919 Pennsylvania Avenue that Columbia opened the first slot-machine par'or."

These slot-machine parlors, it should be explained, were places to which music-seekers could go and, by dropping a nickel in the slot and placing in their ears sound tubes connected to cylinder phonographs, hear the popular songs of the day rendered by some one of the handful of professional singers

whose voices in those days could be reproduced with fair adequacy. Let it be whispered that most of the "parlors" were in saloons, just as the present-day coin-operated electric phonographs are largely found in roadhouses and "beer joints". Len Spencer was soon to become one of the outstanding members of that tiny group of "recording artists".

Mr. Dorian further recollects that, after commercial possibilities in the phonograph were realized, as Edison had predicted they would be, the progressive Spencerian college became one of the first users of the office graphophone (the instrument now better known as the dictaphone), and included a course in its operation as a supplement to its regular shorthand instruction.

"As a junior instructor in the college Len sometimes had to run errands for his father or mother, and in that capacity he visited our office quite frequently to get information, service parts, cylinders or on similar errands. It was during one of those visits that he expressed a desire to make a record of his own voice and was accommodated, with the result that we discovered he had a rich baritone voice, a good style and the ability to put his character into a song. (That was either late in 1889 or early in 1890.)

"It did not take long to reach a bargain with Len, especially as he wanted to supplement his meager income and whatever money he could pick up in his spare time was additional pocket change. We set Spencer down in front of a piano (he could play his own accompaniments), set three or four phonographs on top of the piano with the horns directed as nearly as possible on a level with his mouth, and Spencer would sing and play until he was tired—or until he had made as many records as we could afford to buy at one time. We paid him at the rate of ten cents for each record which passed our tests and was accepted as salable. That was the beginning of Spencer's career as a recording artist."

#### VII.

It must be admitted that this description of Spencer's early recording activities doesn't sound exactly like the beginning of a brilliant career. Yet it wasn't long before the wax cylinders sung by the youth of twenty or so gained a considerable following among slot-machine addicts, and when, a few years afterward, the phonograph became a popular medium of home entertainment, Len Spencer stood at the top of his severely specialized field.

His fame wasn't long in becoming world-

wide, either. There were scores of men making handsome livings in those days by going from one city to another, lecturing on "the latest scientific marvel of the nineteenth century" and giving phonograph recitals. The records were wheezy and uncertain as to time and pitch, but huge audiences attended and applauded rapturously. Soon bicycle dealers and proprietors of small repair shops began putting in stocks of talking machines and records. They ordered cylinders in barrel lots and weren't particularly upset if the pioneer recording companies saw fit to send them nothing but copies of one selection—say a march which a section of the U. S. Marine Band had played over and over again, or duplicates of Len Spencer's interpretation of some ephemeral ballad. The demand was such that anything in the shape of a record would sell. Grief came to overseas dealers only when the barrels arrived with half their easily broken contents smashed to bits. This they frequently did.

So it was that before a very long time the name of Len Spencer was familiar and beloved wherever English was spoken. Incidentally, never throughout his career did Spencer use his full name. For his run-of-the-mine records he called himself Len Spencer. For his "orations" and other offerings with a touch of dignity he became Leonard G. Spencer and, after he married, he made a few records under the name of Garry Allen — Garry being short for Garfield and Allen being taken from his wife's maiden name.

During his later years Spencer was known almost entirely as a comedian with an amazing gift for original dialect work, but when he first visited the Columbia studio he specialized in singing hymns (there was always a deeply religious strain in his nature) and popular ballads. So completely has this aspect of his art been forgotten that today few people know Spencer ever was anything but a humorist and an elocutionist. This applies even to collectors of old records, many of whom have large numbers of examples of the first world-famous recording artist's work.

### VIII.

The long-remembered Dorian recalls an amusing incident of Spencer's earliest recording days.

"There was," Dorian says, "a feature writer by the name of René Bache connected with the Evening Star, who was a rather frequent visitor to our show rooms. As he occasionally gave us a little free advertising in his news-

paper stories, and publicity of that sort was a very valuable asset to a struggling industry, we were entirely willing to entertain him . . . On one of his visits he heard Spencer's record of 'Sadie Ray', a sentimental ditty, and was so enamored of it he had it repeated several times. As he listened through the ear-tubes his repetition of the selection did not disturb the quiet of the show room and he was allowed to go as far as he liked."

Bache, Dorian recollects, decided to try to learn the song, so he sat a long time in front of the phonograph, doing his best to sing in unison with the record.

"Whether he lacked a sense of tone or merely because, his ears being plugged by the tubes, he could not hear his own voice, I do not know, but his efforts to repeat the words and music on the record were so completely off-key and he emitted such a series of remarkably discordant sounds that I had a pretty hard job to maintain order in the business staff . . . 'Sadie Ray' stands out in my memory as one of Spencer's most successful sentimental efforts, which nearly created a riot in an orderly business establishment."

Comedy is often followed, even if at long range, by tragedy, and that was true in Bache's case. On April 19, 1933, Washington papers carried a brief news story saying that René Bache, 72 years old, a writer on popular scientific subjects and said to be the last male descendant of Benjamin Franklin, died last night from an overdose of sleeping powder. Magruder MacDonald, acting coroner, issued a verdict of suicide. Bache, a resident of Washington for 45 years, had been ill for several years and was said to be facing total blindness."

Similarly, Len Spencer in the early 1900's was threatened with the loss of his left eye but afterwards recovered his sight.

### IX.

As "canned music" became ever more popular and improved methods of duplicating original recordings were evolved, to the consequent financial profit of the singer or player, Len lost interest in the business college. One reason for this is said to be that he offended his mother by eloping with Miss Elizabeth Allen, a student at the college, and marrying before Sara Spencer considered him able to undertake the obligations of wedlock.

But singing was not all Spencer did for the Columbia company. He also did most of the "announcing", which was an indispensable feature at the beginning of each cylinder, and which hung on for several years after the

company began to issue the present type of disc. It was his voice that intoned: "And Her Golden Hair Was Hanging Down Her Back! Sung by Mr. George Gaskin for the Columbia Phonograph company of Washington and Paris!" the writer was thrilled, on obtaining a copy of a rare Columbia disc made in 1903 by the great Polish baritone, Eduard De Reszke, brother of Jean, to hear an announcement given at the beginning in Len Spencer's familiar voice. His brother, Harry, also announced occasionally, but apparently during his entire career made only one solo record. That was a blood-curdling recitation, "The Mad Ravings of John McCullough", which stayed in the Edison cylinder catalogue for many years.

When the Columbia company moved its headquarters to New York a year or two before the Spanish-American War, Len went along, and soon his voice was uplifted in metallic praise of "the Columbia Phonograph company of N-e-e-w Yawk and Paris!"

#### X.

Competition in the popular recording field increased in the early 1900's. As improvements were devised in sound recording, Spencer, Dan W. Quinn, George Gaskin, John W. Myers, George Washington Johnson ("the whistling coon"), John York Att Lee, a Washington whistler, and Steve Porter ceased to be about the only men whose voices would make a decent cut on the wax, and even one or two women, such as Minnie Emmett, a fat soprano, made their appearance before the horn. One of these was the late Ada Jones, and, with her invaluable assistance, Spencer not only defied competition but expanded his activities remarkably.

Ada Jones was a highly gifted woman who deserves a few words to herself. It is doubtful if any feminine movie star has ever had a more devoted following among English-speaking people than was possessed by Miss Jones for about ten years, beginning in 1904.

Born in Manchester, England, Ada Jones came to this country with her parents at the age of six and went on the stage a year later. As she grew up she learned the phonograph companies were finding it almost impossible to discover women whose voices would record as anything but a harsh squawk, so she decided to "have a crack at the horn". She succeeded so well that within a year or so men throughout the world, enthralled by the sweeteness of her voice (which Victor and Columbia correctly called a soprano but which the Edison catalogue insisted was a contralto),

sent her proposals of marriage. A wealthy Australian miner was among these unsuccessful suitors. It was widely believed that in private life she was Mrs. Len Spencer, but she married Eddie Flaherty, a vaudevillian.

The wildest rumors were soon in circulation about "the best singer in the world", as thousands of plain people, captivated by her simple ballads, called her. This was especially so in small towns and country districts where the phonograph, then impotent as a bringer into the home of fine symphonic and chamber music performances, furnished about the only relief from monotony and was the poor man's vaudeville theater.

It was whispered that Ada Jones was blind; that she was "just a man that changes his voice", and even that she was a Negress. (This report must have been caused by Miss Jones' expertness with negro dialect.). And every month or so reports were current that the buxom, blue-eyed, blonde Ada Jones, "dream-girl" of any number of men who had no idea what she actually looked like, was dead! There were scores of these false rumors, but the comedienne continued to live and make records until 1922—eight years after the death of her famed associate and instructor.

#### XI.

When Spencer began his partnership with Ada Jones he made a tenstrike. Among their first duet records, made in 1904 or 1905, were two sketches of "tough Bowery life", called "Pals" and "Peaches and Cream". These sold by millions and the second today is retained in one of the major recording company's catalogue of records of historical interest. Then came a long series of sketches about "Chimme and Maggie", archetypes of the now almost extinct Bowery boy and his girl.

In due succession the public was delighted by funny but none too refined "coon skits" like "Mandy and Her Man" and "Jim Jackson's Affinity"; Jewish take-offs such as "The Original Cohens"; "rube specialties" like "Reuben and Rachel"; Irish numbers of which "Sweet Peggy Magee" is a good example—the field was boundless. And all these sketches were written by Spencer and were original with him, except for the occasional introduction of choruses of popular songs. Between times, moreover, he would gratify record buyers with a taste for finer things by reciting De Witt Talmadge's denunciation of infidelity, or the flogging scene from "Uncle Tom's Cabin".

Spencer, if he were living today, probably would be one of the most successful writers

of radio drama or talkie continuity. When it is considered that the average skit recorded by him and Miss Jones ran not more than two minutes and a half and that, even if a twelve-inch disc were used there was only four minutes at his disposal, the facility with which he compressed so much humor or drama into so small a space is nothing short of marvelous. There was not much room for subtle touches, of course, but the dead-and-gone "recording artist" well deserves the title frequently given to him by collectors of old popular records as "the first genius of the phonograph".

## XII.

"Sweet Peggy Magee" is a characteristic Jones and Spencer sketch. As it opens, Peggy is singing softly, but occasionally interrupting the song to call the family cow. Spencer, in the role of a young Irishman, appears and begins making love to the girl, who finds fault with him for "sitting on a stile and smoking in the presence of a lady!" She spurns his advances, as she has done many times before, until he seems to become desperate and says: "Pretty Peggy, ye'll never refuse me agin! Tonight I'm going to be married to the prettiest girl in all Kerry!"

Peggy tries to pretend she is perfectly willing for her admirer to marry, and asks for a description of the girl. Given one, she pronounces the unknown "other woman" to be a "brazen jade" and says Michael is more than welcome to her. At this instant a coach, "on its way to the village", comes up and Michael says, "Up wid ye, me fair one." He then explains Peggy herself is the "prettiest girl in all Kerry" to whom he is to be married. To the great delight of the coach passengers, he puts Peggy into the vehicle and orders the driver to go to the priest's. The coach pulls out with Peggy roguishly threatening to be revenged on Michael "after we are married", and the record ends with the mournful lowing of Miss Magee's neglected cow.

## XIII.

If evidence is demanded of the world-wide fame enjoyed by Len Spencer thirty years and more ago, it may be found in a biographical sketch that appeared in the Talking Machine News published in London in October, 1906. The reference to the comedian's modesty may be largely discounted, however, since veteran phonograph people recall him as a man who knew perfectly well he was a genius and didn't like it at all if by some slip

another artist's name — even Ada Jones' — were placed ahead of his on duet records.

### Said The News:

"The author of character sketches, writer of songs and vaudeville artist who is too modest to write a biographical sketch of himself is a rare bird. But such a man is Mr. Len Spencer. Although Mr. Spencer for many years has been the possessor of a splendid voice with which he has made countless hits through the talking machine and on the vaudeville stage, he has never submitted to the wiles of a press agent or given any biography of any kind . . . Mr. Spencer's popularity has recently caused him to engage an entire floor in Twenty-Eighth Street, in the heart of the theatrical district of New York. His suite is known as The Home of Mirth, Melody and Ideas and every word of that title is borne out by the facts. . .

"His work in dialect has been much enjoyed, more especially in recent years with his partner, Miss Ada Jones. Mr. Spencer's original dialect work was a feature of the Columbia exhibit at the St. Louis exposition (in 1904), where he made souvenir records that were greatly appreciated by the visitors. Before the Business Educators' Association of America, assembled at St. Louis, he also demonstrated the business practicability of the commercial graphophone.

"When Mr. Spencer strikes the trail of a fit subject for a dialect sketch he is relentless as Sherlock Holmes. He has been known to follow such a 'lead' for miles, whether German, Irish, Italian or negro — and he is a master mimic of them all. One striking feature of Mr. Spencer's work is that it is provocative of mirth or tears, to suit the occasion. He reads extensively, making careful research in the field of comedy, and has every facility for creating sketches for his own needs as well as supplying material for many other artists."

Spencer appears to have antedated radio comedians in keeping elaborate files of humorous material, for the article already quoted continues:

"Mark Twain has said there are only six original jokes in the world, but Mr. Spencer seems to have found 600 different ways of treating each of them. He has in his files perhaps 20,000 laugh points . . . Mr. Spencer first introduced the graphophone into minstrel work and has successfully managed several notable amusement enterprises, among them the Len Spencer minstrels and the Elite Vaudevilles, who toured the principal eastern towns. The team of Spencer and Jones has

been offered more vaudeville engagements than it can take care of."

As a typical example of Len Spencer's ingenuity, his "Columbia Minstrels", probably the same vaudeville act as the Len Spencer minstrels already referred to may be mentioned. This consisted of lifelike models of popular recording comedians sitting on the stage in a typical black-face semi-circle. Behind each dummy, concealed by a screen, stood a phonograph. The music appeared to come from the "minstrels" themselves, but records actually were used throughout.

#### XIV.

Two of Spencer's other abilities deserve a bit more mention. He was a past master of the art of taking any subject of topical interest and making an entertaining record. When President Theodore Roosevelt was inaugurated in 1904 the versatile Len successfully concocted a skit commemorating the occasion. In this he spoke, using a dozen or so different voices and commenting on the presidential procession while the orchestra in the background played incidental music. His "Scene at a Dog Fight", made with the assistance of the animal imitator, Gilbert Girard, was not only funny but so realistic that more than one good man almost went crazy from hearing it played time and again on his neighbor's noise machine. There were any number of such sketches. "The Passing of a Circus Parade", "Auction Sale of a Music Store" (which ended in a riot because no matter what instrument was tried out the performer played "Hiawatha") and "Daybreak at Calamity Farm" are characteristic examples.

The comedian showed his more serious side, as has already been hinted, by giving renditions of masterpieces of elocution and drama. When a distinguished statesman got a public utterance of more than ordinary importance off his chest, Spencer usually recorded it. As a rule, the recording company naively (?) omitted to put his name on the label and the record was accepted as an authentic recording by Gladstone, Bryan or whoever the hero might be. That didn't hurt sales a bit.

Shortly after President McKinley was assassinated, in 1901 at the Buffalo exposition, Spencer recorded a speech McKinley had made a few days before his death so effectively nearly every purchaser believed the President himself to be the speaker. Today a few collectors are still looking for copies of that record in the firm belief that William

McKinley was the first President to stand before a recording horn.

#### XV.

So Len Spencer's career, made happy by large earnings from royalties on the sale of millions of records, continued for many years. An almost incredibly busy man, but with a superb power of relaxation, he never, after his earliest days, became an "exclusive artist" for any company, but impartially turned out solos for Victor, Columbia, Edison, Zonophone, Imperial, Leeds, Criterion and all the other disc and cylinder manufacturers of that day and, of course, continued to write and appear in the Jones and Spencer sketches. He also wrote material for other performers who lacked his gift of invention and was known as a discoverer of new recording talent. He appears to have been the first partner of Billy Murray, who within a few years became the most famous of all "popular" recording artists and who supplanted Spencer as Miss Jones's recording associate.

For Spencer was supplanted — or it virtually amounted to that. After 1910 his type of humorous record was less popular, although his monologue, "The Arkansaw Traveler", for many years after his death held rank with Billy Golden's "Turkey in the Straw", Arthur Collin's "Preacher and the Bear", and Murray's "Casey Jones" as one of the classic comic recordings of the pre-electric era.

When December 15, 1914, arrived, electric recording, of the present-day type, was as much undreamed of as radio, but preliminary announcements had long since ceased to be used and cylinders had been almost completely replaced by discs. Spencer had made only two or three records in the preceding three or four years. The last he was ever to make was "Uncle Fritz and the Children's Orchestra", recorded for Edison in time for the 1914 Christmas trade. In it Spencer took the part of a benevolent German uncle who had brought toys to a little group of boys and girls. He had moved his offices to 45 West 42nd Street and was chiefly engaged in writing material for other recording artists, whose popularity had not waned, and for vaudevillians.

#### XVI.

On the afternoon of that December day, the 45-year-old veteran of the recording studios was at his desk, signing a letter in that beautiful flowing Spencerian style he had learned at business college. As he affixed his signature, the pen paused in the middle of his name and rolled from his hand. When

Spencer's body was found slumped across the desk it was plain he had died of a heart attack.

The comedian's will provided that his funeral should be conducted by a Masonic order of which he had been a member many years, and that "The Lord's Prayer" and "the Twenty-Third Psalm" should be played at the funeral services, after which the body was to be cremated. It was also specified that the records by himself, which remained in the Victor and Columbia catalogue for many years afterward, should be played at ten year intervals on the anniversary of his death.

Spencer's widow and his three children — Michael, Ethel and Clare — knew of this stipulation but most of his friends did not. Because of its surprise element, therefore, the scene described at the beginning of this article was all the more affecting. News that he had asked for those records to be played would have been equally touching, had they known of it, to the millions of people who for a quarter of a century had enjoyed his recorded work.

## XVII.

Len Spencer was cremated at North Bergen, N. J. Shortly afterward his ashes were taken to Washington and interred in the family burial plot.

Approximately as much time has now elapsed since the death of "the first great recording artist" as between the beginning and end of his recording career. His fame is now, of course, in eclipse, but there are signs, especially in view of the increasing popularity of the custom of collecting old phonograph records of personal and historic value, that many of the ancient discs and cylinders made by Spencer will come in time to have a value comparable to Currier and Ives prints, rare dime novels and other choice examples of "Americana". That is all the more probable because, as a rule, the "masters" of these old records have been destroyed.

However that may be, Len Spencer's surviving admirers all sturdily insist that he was a genius; that records such as his give a more vivid impression of past American life and customs than can be obtained from almost any other source; and that, as was said in the beginning, it is doubtful if any other man born in the nation's capital ever had the immense following Spencer possessed when he was the undisputed king of the popular record world.

He was certainly too remarkable a man ever to be forgotten entirely.

## THE MUSIC SHELF

I. M. E. ORCHESTRA SCORE LIBRARY. Vol. 1. Beethoven—Seven Overtures in Score. Vol. 2. Eschaikowsky — Three Works. Vol. 3. Brahms—Three Works. Vol. 4. Beethoven—Three Symphonies. \$3.00 per volume, paper-bound, and \$4.40 per volume, cloth-bound. Published by Books and Music, Inc., 113 West 57th Street, New York, N. Y.

The feature of this series of scores is a most valuable one; it provides the full orchestral score and beneath it a piano version. The advantages that scores of this kind provide for the student and the music lover are multiple; they "do much to remove the veil of mystery which surrounds the dissection of a full score in the minds of most music lovers," as Eugene Goossens has said, and they assist the student immeasurably in his study of instrumentation.

Each volume is twelve and a half inches wide by ten inches in depth; each page is divided to contain two pages of orchestral score. The piano version is just below the orchestral score and is advantageously marked with the orchestral instruments. The binding, the paper and the general set-up are attractive. The book lies flat on the music rack, and the pages are easily turned and require no support to keep them open at a given place.

The plan of the I. M. E. Orchestra Score Library is to issue twelve volumes in all. Subscribers to all twelve volumes will be given a better rate than that quoted above. If any of our readers are interested in subscribing to the series, or wish to know what the series will contain, apart from the four volumes above, we suggest that they write the publishers.

Volume 1 contains seven overtures of Beethoven. They are Prometheus, Op. 43; Coriolan, Op. 62; Leonore Overtures No. 1, 2 and 3, Opp. 138 and 72a; Fidelio, Op. 72b; Egmont, Op. 84.

Volume 2 contains Tschaikowsky's Symphony No. 6 in B min., Op. 74 (Pathétique); Romeo and Juliet, Fantasy Overture; and Overture "1812," Op. 49.

Volume 3 contains Brahms' Symphony No. 1 in C minor, Op. 68; Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 73; and the Haydn Variations, Op. 56a.

Volume 4 contains Beethoven's Symphony No. 1 in C major, Op. 21; Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 36; and Symphony No. 3 in E flat, Op. 55.

Vol. 5, announced for early release, will contain five symphonies by Mozart.

## Record Collectors' Corner . . .

Julian Morton Moses

■ Several months ago we spent some time considering the many interesting records hidden in the forbidding pages of the Victor foreign language catalogues. Now we shall attempt to do the same thing for Columbia and perhaps later extend this search in more recent releases and even, believe it or not, to those of the year 1939.

Let us go back 36 years to 1903 when the Columbia Graphophone Company first established large factories in the major European capitals and started sending here examples of the vocal artistry of great singers still unknown to Americans. Considering the fact that their work was hidden to all but their compatriots who lived here, they would still be unknown had not certain native citizens then and now braved the unintelligible languages on the labels in their insatiable demand for new voices.

These early Columbia records appeared in single-face form with the customary black and silver labels and bore numbers varying with the origin of the recording. The most important of these groups and some of the singers therein were: 10,000 series (Italy) Eva Tetrazzini, Wulman, Brancaleoni, De Cisneros, Berl-Reszky, P. Sanz, Mieli, De Negri, Fonari, Ciaparelli, Parvis, and later Formichi, Della Rizza, Frascani, Corradetti, Calleja, Garbin, Finzi-Magrini, etc.; 35,000 series (Russia) Michailowa, Erschoff, Sharnoff, Freif, Labinska, Krisman, Leliwa, Sibiriakoff, etc.; 40,000 series (Germany) Desteri, Nebe, Zummer, Herzog, etc.; and lastly 50,000 series (France) Affre, Mary Boyer, Gallois, Piccaluga, etc.

With the general appearance of Columbia double-face discs in 1908, these were coupled in the "E" series and lost their distinguishing numbers. The labels were changed to black, brown, green, orange, etc. Also, the domestic recording of foreign singers which had always been going on, increased to the extent that by the time of the World War, the French and German additions were almost all from the New York studios though Milan still sent over most of the Italian series and other lan-

guage groups varied between both sides of the ocean.

The singers who made their appearance in this period were frequently artists of the Metropolitan and other companies whose operatic selections graced the regular catalogues but whose folk songs, lieder, and even some operatic arias were relegated to the thin foreign supplements. These included: (German) Sembach, Goritz, Braun Weil, Kurt, Leonhardt, Gerhardt, Jorn, Bloch, Meader; (French) Eva Gauthier, Odette Le Fontenay, Paul Duval, di Primo, Asselin, Harpin, Magnan, Saucier. Even a 1905 Journet *Chanson des peupliers* (No. 3134) was issued in black-face on E619 backed by a band selection. Other language catalogues contained such singers as Janpolski, Staber-Hall, Sundelius, Ballister, Iris, Rode, Anitua, etc.

Occasionally this "E" series coupled selections from general catalogue in a different manner, two of such couplings being: E2206 - *Ich liebe dich* (Olitzka), and *Wiegendien* (Fremstad); and E5095 - *Wanderer*, and *Erlkönig* (David Bispham).

Finally there was the strange habit of Columbia in placing important artists on the lowest priced labels only. This was widespread and deserves at least an article in itself, so we include here only a list of the Columbia blue-label records of two of the singers so treated, Luisa Villani and Carlo Cartica.

Luisa Villani - *Cavalleria Rusticana, Inegiamo* (A5404); duets with Cartica - *Trovatore, Miserere* (A525) and *Aida, O terra addio* (A5331).

Carlo Cartica - Concerted numbers with Allessandrani, etc., *Forza del Destino, Solenne in quest'ora*, and *Martha, Solo, profugo* (A5343); *Faust, Trio* (A5381); *Lombardi, Trio* (A5446); and *William Tell, Trio* (A5465).

\* \* \*

We are anxious to complete our file of Columbia foreign-language catalogues from which the above information was drawn. Will anyone knowing of the whereabouts of any such catalogues please communicate with the writer of this department?

\* \* \*

The following are this month's historic recordings:

MOZART: *La Clemenza di Tito - Non più di fiori*; sung by Louise Kirkby-Lunn, and PONCHIELLI: *La Gioconda - L'amo come il fulgor*; sung by Emmy Destinn and Kirkby-Lunn. I.R.C.C. No. 147, 12-inch, price \$2.25.

The Mozart air is beautifully sung by one of England's foremost artists who joins the

ever great Bohemian singer in a smooth rendition of the fiery *Gioconda* duet.

BELLINI: *La Sonnambula* - *Come per me sereno*, and *Sovra il sen*; and STRAUSS: *Voce di primavera*; sung by Luisa Tetrazzini. I.R.C.C. No. 148, 12-inch, price \$2.25.

The *Sonnambula* scene completes Tetrazzini's selections from this opera. The Strauss waltz is absolutely breath-taking, being one of the early HMV recordings with piano accompaniment, which are among the singer's best records outside of the fine Zonophones.

through the high range and then drop off rapidly near its cut-off point. From the standpoint of noise, this latter curve is decidedly more desirable. The peaks and valleys in a crystal pickup seem to shift with age and changes in temperature and humidity.

Another query, which will interest many readers, many be given and answered here. Should the ideal amplifier for radio and record reproduction for home use have as nearly flat a response as possible, say from 30 to 10,000 c.p.s.?

Because of the bass attenuation on contemporary records, an amplifier for home record reproduction must have some means of boosting bass. A manually adjustable bass-boosting stage is the ideal solution, permitting the listener to add the amount of bass which is pleasing with each recording, and to reduce the boost when using the radio, especially on speech. In the high frequency range, from about 300 cycles to the top, the response can be flat, with a cut-off filter that has several steps, cutting off at say 10,000 cycles, 7,500 and 5,000, etc. This is very useful with noisy records, and is the most satisfactory way of reducing noise without losing too much high-frequency response. Contemporary records do not have much frequency range above 7,000; sometimes the range is higher when the record is new, but after two or three playings the range above 7,000 is generally reduced. There is a tendency toward peaking in some of the so-called higher fidelity recordings of the past year or two, apparently put there with an idea to create the illusion of higher frequency than is actually cut into the wax. This peaking has caused a lot of complaint among people who have not the equipment to handle these records.

[Perhaps it might be well to give an experience that we had recently in connection with the above. We were asked to look over the equipment of a writer who had a good radio outfit but only a small player connection for his records. Most of the so-called higher fidelity records refused to play for him without blasting or blurring or otherwise creating some trouble — even to jumping the groove. We discovered that the listener was fond of having more bass than he required. We further discovered after several tests with the controls that almost all loudly recorded symphonic recordings and particularly recordings that were heavily cut played with a remarkable degree of clarity and precision even through a relatively cheap player connection. The solution for good performance on an outfit of this kind would seem to be turning the

## TECHNICAL TOPICS

ROBERT S. LANIER

■ There seems to be a considerable debate among technical men about sapphire needles, especially when used in an ordinary crystal pickup. Some claim that the points are too hard and wide, and ride the side walls of the groove heavily. If you have found them satisfactory, my advice is to continue to use them; however, I think 500 playings is an absolute maximum, and possibly a few too many at that. It is evident that the sapphire needle is best adapted to a much lighter pickup than the crystal at present. I have not made sufficient tests with this needle to feel justified in praising it or condemning it wholeheartedly. The needle problem, however, as the editor has pointed out, is definitely a personal one.

In regard to speakers, I would like to say, in answer to considerable correspondence received, that a musical ear is really indispensable in lining up a speaker job. The actual result of more than one speaker, and particularly of more than two, in a room is technically speaking really a Chinese puzzle.

A correspondent writes asking me if magnetic pickups have any advantage over crystal ones as regards surface noise. The magnetic and crystal pickups at present available, other characteristics being fairly equal, differ as to surface noise because the characteristic curve of the crystal dips through the 2,000 cycle — 4,500 cycle range, and rises sharply above that. This type of response characteristic puts unadulterated noise, 6,000 cycles up, at a higher level than the important frequencies in the music above 3,000 cycles, in contrast to the magnetic, which is apt to drop slowly

tone control up fairly high on the radio proper, and adjusting the volume from the small record player. Apparently the wider open the volume control on the player is the better the performance through the radio speaker. Ed.]

The following letter from a correspondent in Reno, Nevada, seems to us of general interest.

To the Editor,

In common with your other readers, I rejoice exceedingly at your decision to engage Mr. Lanier as consultant on technical problems, thus adding one more to the numerous services you perform for your readers. It is very difficult, outside of the large population centers, to get unbiased and fully qualified information and advice in case of phonograph trouble. I have found that radio service men, no matter how expert, know comparatively little about problems which are primarily phonographic—and that they invariably refuse to admit any lack of knowledge, but claim to be completely informed on any question. Also, it is difficult to get reliable advice from representatives of the manufacturers, because of their desire to further their sales and maintain the prestige of their merchandise.

I am, therefore, hastening to write in regard to some current difficulties and questions which are occupying me.

I wish first to make a few remarks about my phonograph. I have a Victor Model R-99. A few months ago the magnetic pick-up in the set became unsatisfactory, and I decided to buy a new one. I preferred to get a new pick-up, because I desired one with an off-set head, and also I had been led to believe that crystal pick-ups were superior. Moreover, in a dry climate such as this, the rubber in a magnetic instrument soon hardens, and I hoped for more uniform performance from a crystal. Therefore, advised by a radio man, I sent for a \$14.95 crystal model sold by RCA and had it installed.

*Question No. 1:* Did I make a mistake in changing the pick-up? Recently a Victor representative told me that I should not have attempted to put a crystal in an R-99, that it is impossible to secure the proper reproduction with any other pick-up than the one sold with the set. In your opinion, is this correct?

*Question No. 2:* When I now play records with any straight needle, there is considerable distortion at the end of each side. I am told that the needle point should project a quarter of an inch beyond the center spindle; in my machine the needle tip strikes the nearer side of the spindle, a difference of about one-

fourth inch. Is this difference sufficient entirely to account for the distortion?

*Question No. 3:* Should I have the tone-arm moved, at any cost, to correct its placing? I am told that to do so will be rather expensive, since the surface on which it is placed is metal, in which a new hole must be cut. I therefore hesitate to go to the expense unless it is necessary.

*Question No. 4:* With my tone-arm placed as it is now, I find I can eliminate all evidence of distortion by using a Walco sapphire needle and adjusting it, not in accordance with the direction card, but with the needle aligned with the grooves at the center of the record. Right; but will they be damaged? I have been told that a sapphire needle will ruin the records unless it is adjusted exactly as stated in the instructions.

*Question No. 5:* With this pick-up, there is excessive surface noise. Can this noise be satisfactorily reduced or eliminated, without sacrificing volume, clarity or highs, by introducing a "scratch filter" into the circuit?

I shall be deeply grateful for an answer to the above questions.

Yours very truly,  
Lawton B. Kline.

Reno, Nevada.

Dear Mr. Kline:

1. In order to put a crystal pickup on the R-99 it is necessary to alter the input circuit considerably. The R-99 has an input transformer designed to match a *low-impedance* magnetic pickup, whereas the crystal should work into what is commonly regarded as a high impedance input, 100,000 ohms or more. Also, the R-99 has an elaborate filter arrangement in the input circuit designed to boost the pickup through the bass range. This booster circuit is designed to match the deficiencies of the original pickup, and may or may not be suitable with a crystal. If you want to stick to your crystal — and it should be considerably more successful in your dry climate than here in the humid East — you can have the input transformer removed, and also the filter arrangement immediately preceding the volume control. The pickup should then be connected directly across the volume control. This will eliminate any bass-boost, but since the crystal has a naturally heavy bass and the outfit has a tone control, you may find the results very satisfactory. (All this on the presumption that such changes were not made when you changed your pickup.)

(Continued on page 150)

# OVERTONES

■ To meet the growing market for low cost recordings of the music every-one knows and loves, RCA Victor has announced that the popular 12-inch Victor Black Label series of standard classics are now priced at only \$1.

Accompanying the announcement of this 20 per cent price reduction, W. W. Early, Manager of Recording and Record Sales for RCA Victor announced an extensive program for recording many works of well known musical favorites at this new price.

"This new program will include every type of music which falls within the broad confines of what may be called 'standard musical tastes,'" Mr. Early said. "It is aimed directly at the nation-wide market which, though it is now increasing more rapidly than ever, consistently demands the old favorites — dinner music, light concert and salon music, the beloved songs and melodies that are familiar to all.

"We have organized our recording activities to produce for this market new and attractive higher fidelity recordings of these grand old numbers on 12-inch Black Label records at popular prices. Such outstanding organizations as the Victor Symphony Orchestra, the Victor Concert Orchestra, and the Victor Salon Orchestra are included among the world famous groups and individual artists who will record this music."

The new low price policy and recording program is another phase in RCA Victor's program to provide its dealers with recorded music for every taste, Mr. Early said. "In the belief that the rapidly growing record business will continue to expand, we are prepared to enter every phase of this market which has registered a come-back unique in the annals of American business growth."

\*\*\*

In line with the above, it is rumored that the Coolidge Quartet is making a series of all the Beethoven quartets for Victor, which are to be released in a new "popular priced" series to widen their sales. If this is true one can only lament that it was not the Budapest String Quartet that was chosen for this honor, since its performances of the Beethoven quartets are today without parallel.

\*\*\*

Mr. Charles O'Connell, Director of Recording and Record Sales of R.C.A. — Victor announces that beginning with September,

"each month hereafter there will be in the supplement a Connoisseur's Corner, in which will be found a few recordings of extraordinary interest to the collector — recordings which in the normal course of events might be long delayed in release." In the September list, three imported sets are included in this category—Haydn's *Symphony No. 86* (Walter and London Sym. Orch.), Lekeu's *Sonata in G major* (the Menuhins), and Schubert's posthumous *Piano Sonata in A major* (Schnabel). We are sure our readers will rejoice with us in Victor's new policy, which will undoubtedly prevent the long hold-up on desirable foreign recordings that we have had in the past. We are given to understand that Victor intends to issue a Connoisseur's List early in the Fall with approximately 25 items on it.

## EUROPEAN RECORD RELEASES

### England

THE ENGLISH MUSIC SOCIETY, Vol. 2 — ARNOLD BAX: *Sonata for viola and piano*, William Primrose and Harriet Cohen; Nonett, Griller Quartet, etc.; *Mater ora filium*, B. B. C. Chorus. Columbia ROX 179/185.

BEETHOVEN: *Sonata in A major, Op. 30, No. 1*; Jeno Lener and Louis Kentner. Col. LX8449/51.

BEETHOVEN: *Introduction and Variations on Ich bin der Schneider, Op. 121*; The Danish Quartet. HMV DB5229/30.

BEETHOVEN: *Piano Sonata Society, Vol. 14. - Six Bagatelles, Op. 126; Fantasia in G mi., Op. 77; Rondo a Capriccio in G major, Op. 129; Rondo in A major, Grove's 164; and Variations in F minor, Op. 34*; Artur Schnabel.

BELA BARTOK: *Three Rondos on Folk Tunes, and Roumanian Folk Dances*; Lili Krauss. Parlophone R20434/5.

BIZET: *Carmen Suite*; London Phil. Orch., dir. Beecham. Col. LX823/4.

CHOPIN: *Ballade No. 1, Op. 23*; Benno Moiseivitsch. HMV C3101.

HAYDN STRING QUARTET SOCIETY - Vol. 8 - *Quartets in B fl., Op. 55, No. 1; in E flat, Op. 20, No. 1; in B flat, Op. 55, No. 3; and in B flat, Op. 76, No. 4*; Pro Arte Quartet. HMV.

HOLBROOKE: *Clarinet Quintet in G, Op. 27*; Reginald Kell and Willoughby String String Quartet. Col. LX814/6.

LISZT: *Mephisto Valse, and Au bord d'une source*; Edward Kilenyi. Col. LB 54/5.

MASCAGNI: *Le Maschere - Overture*; E. I. A. R. Sym. Orch., dir. Tansini. Parlophone E11416.

MEYERBEER, Arr. Lambert: *Ballet Suite from Les Patineurs*; Sadler's Wells Orch. HMV C3105.

MOZART: *Adagio in B minor*, K. 540; Lili Krauss. Parlophone R20445.

MOZART: *Quartet in G major*, K. 387; Calvet Quartet. Telefunken E2867/9.

MOZART: *Symphony in G minor*, K. 550; N. B. C. Sym. Orch., dir. Toscanini. HMV DB3790/2.

MOZART: *Don Giovanni - Dalla sua pace*, and *Il mio tesoro*; Richard Tauber. Parlo-Odeon R20444.

SCHUMANN: *Sym. No. 4 in D mi.*, Op. 120; London Sym. Orch., dir. Bruno Walter. HMV 3793/5.

TELEMAN: *Tafelmusik*; Wiesbaden Collegium Musicum. Telefunken A2905/7.

WILLIAMS: *Greensleeves - Fantasia*; and FOULDS: *Keltic Lament*; Jacques Orchestra. Col. DX925.

France

COUILLARD: *Viri Galilaei, Extrait des Motets d'Attaignant*; Mixed Choir a capella. Oiseau-Lyre 23.

COUPERIN: *Seconde Leçon de Tenebres (à une voix)*; Lise Daniels (soprano), Maurice Duruffe (organ) and F. Lemaire (cello). Oiseau-Lyre 43 and 47.

D'INDY: *Sonate en ut pour violin et piano*; Chas. Bistes and Andree Vidal. HMV L1069/72.

LISZT: *Etude No. 11 in D flat major*; Georges Boskoff. HMV DB5090.

GLINKA: *Trio Pathétique* (Clarinet, bassoon, and piano); Lefebre, Oubradous, Gallon. Oiseau-Lyre No. 34/35.

MOZART: *Second Concerto in B flat* (bassoon and orch.), K. Anh. 230. Oubradous and Sym. Orch. Oiseau-Lyre 40/41.

MOZART: *Menuetti*; Symphony Orch. dir. Edvard Fendler. O-L 86/87.

RAMEAU: *Les Paladins*; Symphony Orch. dir. Fendler. O-L 71a/71b.

WOLF: *Wie Glänzt der helle Mond*, and *Tretet ein, hoher Krieger*; Erika Rokyta (soprano) and Noël Gallon (piano). Oiseau-Lyre 22.

WOLF: *Mausfallen-Sprüchlein*, and *Citronenfalter im April*; Rokyta and Gallon. O-L 45.

Germany

BACH: *Toccata and Fugue in D minor*; Fritz Heitman (organ). Telefunken E2780.

BEETHOVEN: *Andante favori in F*; Elly Ney. Electrola DB4676.

BRAMHS: *Sapphische Ode*; and PFITZNER: *Ist der Himmel darum in Lenz so blau*; Friedel Bechmann. Elect. EG6846.

LORTZING: *Der Waffenschmied - Overture*; Seidler-Winkler and Grand Sym. Orch. Elect. EH1254.

MOZART: *Figaro's Hochzeit - Arie des Grafen Almaviva*, Act 3; Gerhard Hüsch. Elect. DB4681.

STRAUSS: *Arabella - Monolog der Arabella*; Margarete Teschemacher. Elect. DB4675.

STRAVINSKY: *Jeu de Cartes*; Berlin Phil. Orch., dir. Stravinsky. Telefunken SK 2460/2.

Paul Whiteman and his musical caravan of 35 players headed into the midwest recently for a two months personal appearance tour of fairs, beach parks, carnivals, theaters and ballrooms. While in Iowa during the latter part of August, Whiteman plans to make a pilgrimage to the grave in Davenport of Bix Beiderbecke (Young Man with a Horn). Bix, rated the greatest trumpeter of his day, was playing with Whiteman's aggregation at the time of his death. Charley Teagarden is to sound taps during the ceremony at the grave.

\* \* \*

Back in January, 1937, when Barbirolli played a *Concerto for Oboe and Strings* on themes of Pergolesi, the program notes of the N. Y. Philharmonic pointed out that this work was written for the principal oboe player of the Scottish Orchestra, Evelyn Rothwell. On July 5 last, Miss Rothwell became Mrs. John Barbirolli. It is to Leon Goossens, the noted English oboist, that Barbirolli owes his thanks for meeting his bride. When the young conductor was leading the Scottish Orchestra, before he became director of the N. Y. Philharmonic, the need for a new oboe player arose. Barbirolli promptly wired his friend Goossens in London for a suggestion. The suggestion turned out to be a pupil of Goossens named Evelyn Rothwell, whom the latter sent with unqualified recommendations. Felicitations to the newlyweds!

\* \* \*

At one of the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra summer concerts in New York recently, Tschaikowsky's *Romeo and Juliet Overture* was played as a feature number. At the conclusion of the selection, one of two dance-mad young people seated in the audience, who had been overheard discussing swing prior to the playing of the overture, proved what the saturation of a piece like *Our Love* can do. Said he to his friend: "Great Guns—what an arrangement!"

## EDITORIAL NOTES

■ Last winter The New York Post started a campaign to increase circulation by giving away for accumulated coupons plus a small fee records of symphonic works played by leading American orchestras under leading conductors. The identity of the performers, however, was not given out, because it was intimated that many of the conductors had contracts with other recording companies and quite naturally at 24 coupons and \$1.93 in cash for such symphonies as Beethoven's *Fifth*, Schubert's *Unfinished*, Mozart's *G minor*, and Tschaikowsky's *Fourth*, it just wasn't fair to the same gentleman's \$2.00 records to have him baldly represented in cold print on records selling for around 65c apiece. A library of ten famous symphonic works was planned and worked out, to which was added an electric record player free of charge.

The success of this venture has been such that in a half-dozen other U. S. cities newspapers are following the lead of the Post, with the difference that no coupons or subscription drives are mixed up in it. The Washington Star was the first paper outside of New York to see the value of the Post's campaign, and bought the right from the original sponsors to promote the venture. The result is that the Los Angeles Times, the Buffalo Courier-Express, the Portland (Ore.) Journal, the Oakland Tribune and the Philadelphia Record are all offering records at approximately 50c each instead of 65c. Outside New York, under the Washington Star's National Committee for Music Appreciation, these records are being sponsored for the purpose of increasing musical appreciation; no coupons are required. It is quite possible that other cities will take over the venture before long, and America through its great publicity forces, the newsheets, will become musically conscious in a bigger way. Over 300,000 albums are said to have been distributed up to now by the post and the Committee.

Far from retarding the record business with the big companies, these cheaper sets have given the business a genuine spurt. And the legitimacy of the venture has made that spurt not just a shot in the arm but a real tonic to the business. No doubt the big companies feel that the great public sooner or later will want some of recordings of similar

music with the names of famous conductors and great orchestras on the record labels, and reproduction that is done under more ideal circumstances. Some of the recordings given out by the newspapers show evidence of hasty performance, insufficient rehearsals and less than the best reproduction. Most of those that we have heard suffer from definitely poor monitoring. We can well believe, for example, that whoever was responsible for the *Unfinished Symphony* of Schubert might not care to have his name on it; there are evidences of careless direction here and the reproduction is sadly lacking in essential bass. Again, whoever is responsible for the performance of Tschaikowsky's *Fourth* would probably feel much the same way; there's some pretty shoddy playing here, in our estimation. But many of the performances are fully worth the price. We get a lot worse upon occasion in our concert halls and via radio. Rumor has it that the New York Philharmonic, the New Friends of Music, the Philadelphia, and the N.B.C. Symphony Orchestras, together with conductors like Ormandy, Rodzinski, Reiner and Stiedry, were all used in the making of the ten sets. Samuel Chotzinoff, the Post's critic, chose the repertoire and selected the conductors, we are given to understand. Rumor has it that Haydn's *Symphony No. 99* and Mozart's *G minor* are products of the New Friends of Music Orchestra, and that the Debussy and Wagner excerpts were made by the N. Y. Philharmonic.

### SET-UP CHANGES

The growth of the AML has occasioned its entry as Second Class Matter in the mails. This has necessitated certain changes in the set-up of the magazine. Since permanent features are not allowed by the postoffice, it was necessary to alter the portrait insertion so as to make it a more definite part of the magazine.

A second class permit has an implication which is always to the advantage of the subscriber. It assures him that the magazine is a regular feature and not a transitory one; in our case it means that we are compelled by law to publish twelve issues a year.

The new cover was designed to tell the

Victor Record Musical  
Masterpiece of the Month

PROKOFIEFF'S

# "PETER AND THE WOLF"

(ORCHESTRAL FAIR-TALE)

Played by

THE BOSTON  
SYMPHONY  
ORCHESTRA

Serge Koussevitzky, Conductor

Richard Hale, Narrator



LAST YEAR it was the Boston Symphony recording of Prokofieff's "Lieutenant Kije Suite" which made one of the great musical sensations of the season. This year the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Serge Koussevitzky, Prokofieff, and the distinguished American actor, Richard Hale, are winning even greater plaudits with "Peter and the Wolf". You will be charmed by this witty satirical work in the form of an orchestral fairy-tale. Various instruments in the orchestra characterize Peter, the duck, and the other animals. Mr. Hale narrates the story as the music unfolds. It is unlike anything you have ever heard before, and you will love it. Album M-566 (AM-566 for automatic operation) 6 sides, with descriptive booklet, \$6.50.

The World's Greatest Artists are on Victor Records



NEW *Higher Fidelity* VICTOR RECORDS

A Service of the Radio Corporation of America



Page 137

#### HEIFETZ BRINGS US A GREAT BEETHOVEN SONATA

The matchless technique and warmly human musicianship of Jascha Heifetz make this one of the Olympian violin recordings. Emanuel Bay's piano accompaniment also should be noted for its pure identification with the spirit of the Heifetz playing. Sonata in G Major (Beethoven) Album M-570 (AM-570 for automatic operation) 5 sides, with descriptive booklet, \$5.50.

#### MOZART QUARTET No. 1 IN G MAJOR

*Minuetto from Quartet No. 13 in D Minor  
by the Kreiner Quartet*

Of irresistible interests to the enormous army of Mozart lovers, because this lovely quartet was composed when Mozart was only fourteen years old. It's full of typical Mozart charm and performed with flawless style by the famous Kreiner Quartet. Album M-393 (AM-393 for automatic operation) 6 sides, with descriptive booklet, \$5.00.

#### CHOPIN'S CONCERTO No. 2 IN F MINOR

*by Alfred Cortot  
with orchestra conducted by John Barbirolli*

Deluxe Chopin as only the dean of French pianists can render it. Album M-567 (AM-567 for automatic operation) 8 sides, with descriptive booklet, \$8.00.

#### RCA VICTROLA U-26 with automatic record changer and Electric Tuning

Tone triumphant in this superb RCA Victrola which combines Victor Record and radio entertainment. Has new, Gentle Action automatic Record Changer and Electric Tuning—Push a button. There's your station. Note the smart, convenient divided lid which allows you to play phonograph without disturbing decorative objects on top. In mahogany or walnut veneer. Price includes \$9.00 in any Victor or Bluebird Records.

**\$165.00\***

\* Price f.o.b., Camden, N. J., subject to change without notice. For finer radio performance—RCA Victor Radio Tubes. Trademarks "RCA Victor", "Victor" and "Victrola", Reg. U. S. Pat. Off. by RCA Mfg. Co., Inc.

story of the magazine instantly to any who might see it on the newsstands and music counters where it is sold throughout the country. By and large the magazine is sold by most of the best music dealers from coast to coast. If any reader feels that it should be on the counter of any store not already selling it, we would appreciate it very much if he would give us the name and address of the store. Since the magazine is a specialized one, it is not practical to place it on the newsstands generally. Up to now it has been sold on certain selected newstands in several of the largest cities of the country. When and if it appears practical we can assure our readers the magazine will become a newsstand item.

As regards the new set-up of the magazine, this has been done to allow the purchase of more valuable material in its contents. It has permitted us, among other things, to add to the staff a man of Mr. Lanier's calibre. Judging from the volume of correspondence received, Mr. Lanier's advent has been widely appreciated. At this time, we would like to say that neither Mr. Lanier nor the editors have any axes to grind, and that all opinions or recommendations either from a musical or technical standpoint are given honestly and freely and not through the influence of an advertiser or patron. You may not agree with us but our opinions are generally backed up by a group of experts; each man who writes regularly for the magazine has been trained in his particular field and speaks from long familiarity with his subject.

#### CONTEST AWARDS

The contest on *Why Should Every Home Have a Record Library?* has entailed more work than the judges bargained for. In other words the number of really good letters far exceeds the number of prizes. The awards will probably be in the hands of the winners by the time readers receive this issue, but at the time of going to press the judges are in a huddle, deadlocked, with fifteen good letters before them. We ask our readers' indulgence.

The outstanding feature of the letters was the honest love and true knowledge of recorded music. More than half of those who wrote in, in their anxiety or eagerness to impress, resorted to a fatal tendency to scold or preach. Some of the best arguments appeared in letters whose over-all effect was not convincing. Many letters had excellent ideas lost

in ineffectual writing; that is, far over on page two or three the writer would suddenly advance an original idea or suggestion that was really worthwhile.

The general consensus of opinion is that children having records in the home will derive great benefit from them. Along this line, some writers told of personal experiences, but although many of these were interesting none had the necessary punch, in our estimation, to compel the recipient or reader of the letter to acquire a phonograph and a collection of records. We could quote a great many nice bits from letters, but space unfortunately does not permit; however we feel justified in citing some paragraphs from various letters that were not deemed worthy of winning a prize.

Had the gentleman who wrote the following been able to develop his letter around this thought, we feel he would have been a runner-up on the prize. "Musical history tells us of Prince Nicholas entertaining his friends at his beautiful estate at Esterhazy with his own private orchestra, Haydn being the conductor and the composer. It was during the following century (19th) one of the greatest distinctions in a musician's life to give a command performance before a reigning monarch. Well, my friend, 19th-century royalty in its golden age never had available as many fine artists as you, an American workman, will command through your new phonograph and record library."

Writes another: "I have found a new and absorbing interest at forty that will bring me greater delights as the years slide gracefully by. Music never grows old. And fine recordings of worthwhile music are therefore like priceless friendship — they never cease to bring one joy and happiness."

It was generally agreed by the correspondents that record collecting was an absorbing and most rewarding hobby, but it remained for one writer, Mr. Robert C. Hackett of Sunbury, Pa., to point out that it was unique among hobbies in that the parts of the collection had to be used to be enjoyed. Mr. Ellis J. Green of Old Town North Attleborough, Mass., contributed a bit of worthwhile auditing when he said: "An album containing only five records costing ten dollars may seem expensive, but if you play it every two weeks for ten years, the cost amounts to about seven cents per hour. Not much, when you consider that you will pay two dollars to hear the same artists give perhaps a performance less convincing, or even inferior, in concert."

# RECORD NOTES AND REVIEWS

## ORCHESTRA

BACH: *Fugue in C minor (No. 2 from Book One of The Well-Tempered Clavier)*; and FRESCOBALDI: *Gagliarda* (both orchestrated by Leopold Stokowski); played by the Philadelphia Orchestra, Leopold Stokowski, conductor. Victor 10-inch disc, No. 1985, price \$1.50.

■ Perhaps no series of Red-Seal records has enjoyed quite such popularity as have Stokowski's Bach transcriptions — and this in spite of all the raving the purists have done against them. There is no use entering again into the discussion of their position as masterpieces or abominations, for they will remain either the one thing or the other to each reader according to what his tastes and opinions may be at the outset. Nor is it really necessary to discuss the recording of a new addition to this series, for Stokowski's discs are almost invariably successful from the mechanical point of view. We may feel that the *C minor Fugue* has been overloaded in this arrangement, and that its essentially jaunty nature has been sacrificed to a misplaced pomposity, but we cannot deny that what has been done has been well done.

The Frescobaldi piece is more disarming because it is not so familiar and because its less involved texture is better adapted to Stokowski's rich and smooth orchestration and playing. Never has the conductor given a more effective performance, and never has the orchestra sounded better. The peculiar timbre of the Philadelphia strings, of course, is famous, but never has it seemed more ravishingly beautiful than here. Whatever one may think of the Bach side of this disc, only a severe and stubborn critic could fail to find some beauty in the Frescobaldi. P. M.

\*\*\*

BRAHMS: *Waltzes* (a group from Op. 39); CHOPIN: *Grief* (Arr. G. Walter); played by Orchestre Raymonde. Columbia disc, No. 7353-M, price \$1.00.

■ A glance at the labels of this disc will tell the whole story — familiar music in lush sentimental salon orchestrations. The Brahms *Waltzes*, as we would expect, begin and end

with the popular *No. 15*, which undergoes some mildly startling changes. The Chopin piece, masquerading under the title *Grief*, is the old familiar *Etude in E major*, Op. 10, No. 3. It gets the name, I believe, from one of the various song versions. The performances on both sides of this disc are good for what they are, and the recording would pass any test.

\*\*\*

DELIBES: *Lakmé* — *Ballet (Dances des Bayardes)*; played by a Symphony Orchestra, D. E. Inghelbrecht, conductor. Two Columbia discs, 10-inch, Nos. P-17142D-43D, price \$1.00 each.

■ A fresh hearing of the ballet music from *Lakmé* reminds me not only of the wave of pseudo-orientalism that swept over French music in the last century, but also of the fact that practically the whole of 19th-century French ballet was summed up in Gounod's *Faust*. I am not sure that the *Paust* ballet is any better music than this from *Lakmé*, but it is older and we know it first — therefore its value is greater. Delibes is fortunate, to be sure, that his music has survived at all, for many similar attempts by such men as Félicien David, and even Bizet and Saint-Saëns have been forgotten. The performance here is a good one, as it should be, coming from France. In reproduction it represents studio recording fairly well, for while it does not have too much resonance, neither is it dead.

\*\*\*

GLUCK: *Iphigénie en Aulide* — *Overture* (Wagner version); and CORELLI: *Adagio* (from *Sonata for violin and basso continuo*, Op. 5 No. 5) (Arr. Filippi); played by the Columbia Broadcasting Symphony Orchestra, Howard Barlow, conductor. Columbia set X-138, two discs, price \$3.50.

■ Every new Gluck recording is an event, for the works of this truly great master are most wrongfully neglected. The overture to *Iphigénie en Aulide* is one of the most dramatic he wrote: in fact in all music one searches in vain for a finer expression of exalted tragedy. From the opening note the feeling is present, and through the various

moods of the overture it never for a moment relaxes.

Although Wagner made an extensive revision of the opera for production in Dresden, in 1847, his concert version of the overture dates from a later performance in Zurich. As planned by Gluck the overture leads directly into the great recitative of Agamemnon, *Diane impitoyable* (why does not one of our baritones record this magnificent scene?). In order to make a usable ending Wagner added thirty-three measures based mostly on the theme of the recitative — the same theme with which the overture opens, and which is heard again during its course. In his excellent book on Gluck Dr. Alfred Einstein has a good deal to say about Wagner's revision of the opera, which he considers a falsification of the composer's intentions. What has been done to the overture, however, is hardly so serious, and Wagner was not the first composer to supply a concert ending. A previous attempt was for a time ascribed to Mozart, although it is now established as the work of one J. B. S. Schmidt.

*Iphigénie en Aulide* was the first of the operas Gluck wrote for Paris, and therefore its historical importance cannot be overstated. The composer's revolutionary theories had been so exploited in advance of the production that the work was famous even before it had been heard. Forkel's estimate of the overture is amusing: "This overture, which is brought forward as an example of a true overture, is in no way an overture, for it has not in the slightest degree any of the true and characteristic features. We must therefore put in the class of symphonies, and it must then be said that as a symphony it has no high rank."

It was time for a new recording of this work which posterity has come to regard as a masterpiece. The best previous version was made some years ago by Richard Strauss with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra for Polydor, and was pressed in this country by Brunswick. In the mechanics of reproduction a comparison of these two recordings makes an interesting study. For while the Strauss disc dates from the period when hall resonance was the highest aim and basses were inclined to be tubby, that of Mr. Barlow has that present day tendency to deadness. Neither recording is an extreme case, however, and the Strauss disc still sounds quite well, though it is of course by no means so brilliant as that of Barlow. In performance I find more real dramatic impact in the older record. Barlow, taking the work in more leisurely

fashion, fills three sides instead of two, and in thus drawing matters out, it seems to me, loses some of the force of the music.

The Corelli piece which completes the set naturally sacrifices its intimacy in transcription. The melody is a characteristically broad and dignified one, and Mr. Barlow successfully emphasizes these qualities.

\* \* \*

PROKOFIEFF: *Peter and the Wolf*, Op. 67; played by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Serge Koussevitzky, conductor; Richard Hale, narrator. Victor set M-566, three disc, price \$6.50.

■ I may seem a little unappreciative of the musical merit of this delightful work if I compare it to an old specialty, a record of which used to be in every home, called *The Three Trees*. But such is the apparent novelty of *Peter and the Wolf* that I can think of no other way of proving, in this case, the truth of the old saying that there is nothing new under the sun. Of course I do not mean to imply that there is any musical similarity in the quality of the two works — for *Peter and the Wolf* is a worthy composition of one of the leading composers of our time.

I shall not spoil the fun by even hinting at the plot of this *Orchestral Fairy-Tale*. The text has been translated into very effective English which has that blend of childish simplicity and sophistication so characteristic of the best children's literature. The reading is done for us by Richard Hale, who brings out the delicious drama with just the right touch of dead seriousness.

But after all, the important thing is the descriptive music Prokofieff has provided. This Russian has always been one of the wittiest of composers, and he has cultivated a genuine lyric gift. Furthermore his sense of characterization is nothing short of superb, and it is given free rein here. To make things perfectly clear the personages of the story are introduced at first with their representative musical colors, and the aptness of the latter is made very evident. Later, as the various characters are brought into contrast and conflict, the cleverness is amazing. And this cleverness seems to grow with repeated playing of the records. Like all the best things that have been written for children, *Peter and the Wolf* has more in it than they will understand until they grow up. It is good to see a composer of standing concerning himself with such material as this, for as long as there is such humanity and

# COLUMBIA RECORDS of the MONTH



## A Famous Liszt Work in the Grand Tradition



Two Great Masters—EMIL SAUER left, and FELIX WEINGARTNER

### CONCERTO NO. 1

IN E FLAT MAJOR, FOR PIANO AND ORCHESTRA:

EMIL SAUER at the piano,

FELIX WEINGARTNER conducting the  
Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire, Paris

Emil Sauer, one of the few living pupils of Liszt, and Felix Weingartner, world-famous conductor, combine their genius to create a superb new

Columbia recording in the great Liszt tradition. A Masterwork you will wish to own as soon as you have heard this glowing interpretation.

Album M-371 (three 12-inch Records) . . . . . Price \$5.00

GLUCK: IPHIGÉNIE EN AULIDE—OVERTURE  
CORELLI: ADAGIO (From Sonata, Op. 5, No. 5)

Howard Barlow and

COLUMBIA BROADCASTING SYMPHONY

This is the Wagner Edition of the Gluck Overture in three parts, which Barlow reads in the true classic spirit. There is also a beautiful adagio for violin and bass continuo from a Corelli Sonata, transcribed by Filippi.

Album X-138 (two 12-inch Records) . . . . . Price \$3.50

### DEBUSSY:

ARABESQUE NO. 1, IN E MAJOR  
ARABESQUE NO. 2, IN G MAJOR

WALTER GIESEKING, Pianist

While he was in America, Columbia succeeded in getting Giesecking to remake these two exquisite arabesques. Giesecking's Columbia recordings are acclaimed nationally for their brilliance of interpretation and fidelity of tone.

10-inch Record . . . . . Price \$1.00

SARASATE: DANSES ESPAGNOLES  
(A Collection of Four)

OSSY RENARDY, Violinist

with Walter Robert at the piano

Album X-134 (two 12-inch Records) Price \$3.50

DELIBES: LAKMÉ—BALLET  
(DANSES DES BAYADERES)

D. E. INGHELBRECHT

and symphony orchestra

Two 10-inch Records . . . . . Price \$1.00 each

### WAGNER: SIEGFRIED IDYLL

Felix Weingartner and

LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

A Wagnerian favorite made up of four themes from *Siegfried* and an extract from an old German lullaby. It's great on Columbia, played by the London Philharmonic under the inspired baton of Felix Weingartner.

Album X-139 (two 12-inch Records) . . . . . Price \$3.50

### SCARLATTI: SONATAS

(A Collection of Eleven)

ROBERT CASADESUS, Pianist



In these Columbia recordings, the eminent French pianist displays his musicianship with such skill that you envision the harpsichord for which these delightful sonatas were originally composed. A "must" for your library.

Album M-372 (three 12-inch Records) . . . . . Price \$5.00

ROBERT CASADESUS

MOZART: SONATA IN F MAJOR, K. 145  
SONATA IN C MAJOR, K. 329

NOELIE PIERRONT, Organist

with Ruggero Gerlin conducting orchestra

12-inch Record . . . . . Price \$1.50

The foregoing is but a sample of the musical feast Columbia has prepared for you this month. A really splendid collection.

## COLUMBIA RECORDING CORPORATION

BRIDGEPORT, CONNECTICUT

A Subsidiary of the Columbia Broadcasting System

humor in our new music we may be sure that the art is not dead.

It hardly needs saying that the work gets an outstanding performance by the orchestra under Dr. Koussevitzky, and the recording is generally satisfactory. I have noticed an occasional fuzziness in the latter, but not enough to destroy my pleasure in a thoroughly charming and different composition.

P. M.

\* \* \*

SIBELIUS: *Finlandia*, Op. 26, No. 7; Victor Symphony Orchestra, direction Rosario Bourdon. Victor disc 36227, price \$1.00.

SIBELIUS: *Valse Triste*; and DEBUSSY: *Clair de lune*; played by Victor Concert Orchestra, direction of Rosario Bourdon. Victor disc 36228, price \$1.00.

KREISLER: *Tambourin Chinois*, Op. 3, and *Caprice Viennois*, Op. 2. Victor 10-inch disc 26306.

BRAHMS: *Hungarian Dance No. 5*; and *Lullaby*. Victor 10-inch disc 75c each.

Both played by Victor Salon Orchestra, direction Rosario Bourdon.

■ One suspects that the orchestra in all these records is pretty much the same, the only difference being in the number of players. *Finlandia* suggests an orchestra of perhaps a little over half the size of a regular symphony. The *Valse Triste* and *Clair de lune* suggest a smaller orchestra, and the salon pieces a still smaller one. There is nothing exciting about any of these recordings; all are given tasteful and musicianly performance by a conductor who has done similar work in the past for Victor, and who more recently, has been heard on the air. A sharper rhythmic emphasis and a more secure beat would have been of value in the two Sibelius compositions. The Debussy piece gains much in being recorded on one side of a disc. The arrangement here is an unpretentious but effective one, wisely excluding the cheapening vibraphone. The other pieces are conventional arrangements, such as we hear in restaurants that have wired music. Recording is good, but definitely lacking in room resonance. The surfaces of these discs are much to Victor's credit, being entirely smooth. In records at this price, we are not usually given such quiet surfaces.

\* \* \*

WAGNER: *Rienzi - Overture* (3 sides); and *Tannhäuser - Fest Marsh*; played by the Boston "Pops" Orchestra, direction of Arthur Fiedler. Victor set M-560, price \$3.50.

■ Stokowski did this overture for Victor back in 1927. One wonders why he was not

requested to re-record it. There was more genuine glow and regal splendor in his reading. Fiedler seems over-deliberate and unnecessarily ponderous here. But the show is made most effective with brilliant and wide-range recording. The reproduction may give some people a bit of trouble, for this is one of the really tremendous Boston "Pops" recordings, and low-grade pickups cannot begin to handle the percussion and the overemphasized strings here. Even on a "higher fidelity" machine we noticed a fuzziness in the string tone. Best results will be got with the use of the bass booster, since the emphasis here is not on that side of the music.

After a hearing of Beecham's recent recording of the *Fest Marsch* from *Tannhäuser*, the present rendition suggests the guests were not having as good a time as at the Beecham show.

\* \* \*

WAGNER: *Siegfried Idyll*; played by London Philharmonic Orchestra, direction of Felix Weingartner. Columbia set X-139, two discs, price \$3.50.

■ The recordings of this work are too numerous to count. Why this one was added to the long list, we cannot say. Perhaps Weingartner wanted to do it, and maybe someone thinks he plays the music better than anyone else. It is an opinion that few, we believe, will share. Weingartner does not satisfy emotionally here; his reading is lacking in sentiment, it is too straightforward and unyielding. One can admire the clarity and balance of the instrumentation, and the conductor's gift for clean phrasing, but his shaping of the music fails to linger in the memory. Tonally he is more satisfying than Toscanini, who keeps his performance too much on the soft side without sufficient contrast, yet Toscanini's reading is remembered for its sympathetic qualities. But both Walter and Meyrowitz have given us more cherishable readings, and so it goes. From the standpoint of recording, the new set is first-rate in every respect; the orchestra is not a large one but this is in keeping with Wagner's intentions.

\* \* \*

YRADIER: *La Paloma*; and SERRADELL (Trans. by F. Findlay): *La Golondrina*; played by the Boston "Pops" Orchestra, direction of Arthur Fiedler. Victor 10-inch, disc 4434, price \$1.00.

STRAUSS: *Perpetuum mobile*; and BRAHMS (Arr. G. H. L. Smith): *Cradle Song* and *Waltz in A flat*; played by the Boston "Pops" Orchestra, direction Arthur Fiedler.

more  
read-  
and un-  
now is  
widely  
give  
is one  
"Pops" re-  
begin  
empha-  
"fidelity"  
string  
use  
s here

nt re-  
äuser,  
were  
echam

ondon  
Felix  
two

o nu-  
added  
rhaps  
maybe  
r than  
, we  
s not  
lack-  
d and  
y and  
con-  
shap-  
mory.  
anini,  
n the  
yet  
r its  
r and  
able  
point  
every  
e but  
ons.

rans.  
ed by  
n of  
4434,

HMNS  
and  
oston  
dler.

Victor 10-inch disc 4435, price \$1.00.

■ Mr. Fiedler will excuse us, perhaps, if we say that we think he suggests only in the Johann Strauss number that he is enjoying himself. Although much too heavily recorded for its own good, the *Perpetuum mobile* is given a brilliant performance here. The Brahms excepts, not too well arranged, are less forcefully recorded, and played quite "straight".

The recording of *La Paloma* is almost distorted at the opening and there is more than one suggestion of over-cutting in its several climaxes; *La Golondrina* fares better but it is also recorded, in our opinion, too heavily for the good of its type of music. The Victor supplement claims that these are performances in the true "Pops" style, so maybe we are wrong in believing that the Boston "Pops" Orchestra can do better.

P. G.

## CONCERTOS

CHOPIN: *Concerto No. 2 in F minor, Opus 21*; played by Alfred Cortot and Orchestra direction of John Barbirolli. Victor set M-567, four discs, price \$8.00.

■ Chopin wrote his piano concertos because of public demand: it was essential for him as a young and promising Polish virtuoso to compose such works in order to strengthen his position as a composer. This concerto was really written before the E minor, but published later. It was written in the winter of 1829-1830, the composer's twentieth year, after a trip to Vienna where his public appearances had incited among other encomiums Schumann's famous panegyric—"Hats off, gentlemen; a genius!" In March 1830, since the newspaper notices from Vienna had aroused the curiosity of Warsaw to hear its young genius in concert again, Chopin gave two concerts, both of which were highly successful. The F minor Concerto was given a place of honor at these concerts, but since it was the fashion in those days to give even symphonies (Beethoven's no less) piecemeal, the Allegro was played first as a separate composition and later in the program the Adagio and Rondo followed.

Much has been written about Chopin's inability to write in the sonata form, and the opening movements of his piano concertos have been widely criticized. Tovey contends that the concertos need more indulgence. The F minor, he says, "though not a powerfully organized work, has no fatal flaw; and its style is the perfection of ornament."

The core of the work is the lovely Lar-

ghetto, which like the Romance in the E minor is a masterpiece in mood and style. It is music wholly for the pianist; the orchestra is merely used as a sustaining background. Its poetic beauty came straight from the heart. The first movement, which was cut slightly in the two previous recordings, is given here in its entirety, with the lengthy introduction occupying three quarters of the first record face. The restoration of the material cut in the previous recording is not helpful to the fullest enjoyment of this movement; however, the movement is in every way a better one than the corresponding one in the E minor Concerto, and it must be said that both Cortot and Barbirolli do justice to it.

Arthur Rubinstein and Marguerite Long have both recorded this concerto. Rubinstein's set is the older, dating from 1930. Unlike his recording of the E minor Concerto, his F minor does not do justice to his artistry. H. M. V. at that period was not as successful in recording piano tone as it is today. Had the recording been better one suspects his set would have been the ideal one; for Long's, despite this lady's clarity and finesse, lacks the fire that smoulders in this music. Cortot, who has never been an ideal pianist to record, fares much better than either of his predecessors, and despite a few tonal blemishes his playing emerges as the most satisfactory throughout. Naturally the orchestra, an unnamed one but satisfactory, is recorded better in this new set, being more vital and full. But it is the understanding, poetic playing of the pianist that distinguishes this recording. Cortot's reading of the Larghetto is truly treasurable; it has both the requisite delicacy and the fervor. Mlle. Long does not realize the emotional depth of this movement, and Rubinstein does not achieve the intensity of Cortot's reading. In the finale Cortot strikes best the pulse of this music.

Although not by any means as distinguished a recording as the recent E minor (Victor set M-418), the reproduction here will be found quite satisfactory.

\*\*\*

LISZT: *Piano Concerto No. 1 in E flat major*; played by Emil Sauer and Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire, Paris, direction Felix Weingartner. Columbia set M-371, three discs, price \$5.00.

■ This is largely a tribute to a great pianist of an earlier generation, a virtuoso of the keyboard, who in his prime vied with the greatest pianists of his day, and who is still, at seventy-seven, a remarkable performer. Sauer

was a pupil of Rubinstein at Moscow, and of Liszt at Weimar. From 1882 to 1908, he made extensive tours of Europe and America with notable success. In recent years Sauer has been more famous for his teaching, and many are his successful pupils now before the public.

It was but natural that Sauer chose a Liszt concerto to make his re-entry into the recording field. He has made several recordings in the past, but nothing of great importance. Modern recording has made this veteran pianist's debut in a concerto a splendid one. The sonority of his full-bodied tone is captured and reproduced grandly. And the balance between the piano and the orchestra is another capital job. One's feeling may be, upon a first hearing, that there is more volume here than has been got out of the piano in a recording to date. The stunning effectiveness of the whole thing for the moment, however, is deceiving. Turn to the recording that Giesecking and the London Philharmonic Orchestra made of the work about five years ago: it still remains one of the remarkable concerto contributions to the phonograph. As a matter of fact it is even more forceful and louder in reproduction than the present set. It has the added advantage of incorporating the concerto into four sides whereas here it is spread out over six sides, some of them containing very small measure.

Giesecking's pace is slightly faster than Sauer's. One can readily believe that the latter matched the younger man's tempi in his day, but at three score and ten, even if one's prodigious technique still remains practically intact, it is not to be expected that one would set the pace of a man in his thirties. The opening allegro maestoso occupies the first two sides in this set: Giesecking got all but twelve bars of this onto his first side. Giesecking's second side runs just short of Sauer's third side; it breaks the quasi adagio some 20 bars before the allegretto vivace. There is something to be said for the breaks in the new set,—side four, for example, begins the scherzando, while sides three and four house the quasi adagio. Giesecking is definitely more alert and buoyant in his opening, but Sauer matches him in the poetic moments. In the slow section Giesecking lacks the repose of Sauer, but in the scherzando he excels, for the playing of the younger man is fleeter. As a testimonial to the artistry of a pianist of the old school, however, this is one of the foremost sets of its kind so far issued.

Liszt's use of the triangle in the capricious allegretto vivace, marked scherzando, caused

no end of controversy when the concerto was first heard in Vienna. Hanslick, the noted critic, with every intention of belittling the work, nicknamed it the "Triangle Concerto". Undoubtedly Liszt's use of the triangle is both effective and original, but to me its sudden entrance into the score seems almost trivial after the impressive close of the slow section with its brilliant trill for the solo instrument, although in the subsequent part of the movement, with its delightful Mendelssohnian fancifulness, it is entirely in keeping. One wonders if it was not the entrance of the instrument that offended Hanslick rather than its actual use in the movement.

Granting that Liszt showed ingenuity in the alteration of his thematic material in this work, his re-use of the theme of the quasi adagio in the final allegro marziale has never seemed to me entirely judicious. The exaltation of the opening phrase may be fully justified, but the distortion of the latter half of the theme as suddenly blasted out by bassoons and trombones (near the end of side 5) is cheap. Of course, it supplies the martial implication of the marking of the movement, but it's nonetheless an "earsure" in repetition. That Liszt had a predilection for this sort of pomp and circumstance is borne out in more than one work (*Les Preludes* for one). However, one either accepts Liszt with his amalgamation of tinsel and gold or passes him up entirely.

The brilliance and fervor of this work hardly needs to be described here — it has been almost a compulsory item in the repertoire of every great pianist ever since the sixteen-year old Sophie Menter braved the critics' wrath by playing it at her debut in Vienna with the celebrated Philharmonic Society. Her success upon that occasion was not only tremendous but effective in removing all previous opposition to the work.

P. H. R.

## CHAMBER MUSIC

BEETHOVEN: *Sonata in G major, Op. 30, No. 3*; played by Jascha Heifetz, violin, and Emmanuel Bay, piano. Victor set M-570, five sides, price \$5.50.

■ Last month I took considerable pleasure in reviewing a recording of this sonata played for Columbia by Nathan Milstein and Arthur Balsam. Victor, not to be outdone, now engages the services of Jascha Heifetz and Emmanuel Bay, thus presenting another of those pleasantly familiar quandaries for the prospective buyer. The Columbia set has the ad-

antage of economy, for those who choose it will save two dollars. The counterbalance, aside from the magic of Heifetz's name — which will be enough to sell the Victor set to many — is an extra record side which Heifetz fills by making the full repeat in the first movement.

Musically the choice between the two recordings must be an unusually personal one, for all four of the musicians concerned are noted for their sound musicianship, and both of the violinists are virtuosi celebrated for qualities other than burning passion in their playing. Technically I do not hesitate to give the palm to the Columbia recording because the balance is better and the piano tone more pleasing. In the approach of the artists, too, I find Columbia in the lead, for they play in a more authentic chamber style, Milstein accepting Balsam on equal terms. Heifetz has not, indeed, allowed himself all the airs of a prima donna, but throughout the sonata he is just a trifle too dominant. It is not surprising, of course, that the Heifetz tone is more beautiful in itself than that of Milstein (although there are a few scratchy notes in the Victor recording) and there is more of an attempt at variety and color in his playing. Personally I like the cool and straight conception of Milstein in this almost Mendelssohnian music. Perhaps the simplest solution to those who would make the choice would be to order whichever set is the more convenient: if they don't listen to the other they are likely to be pleased in either case.

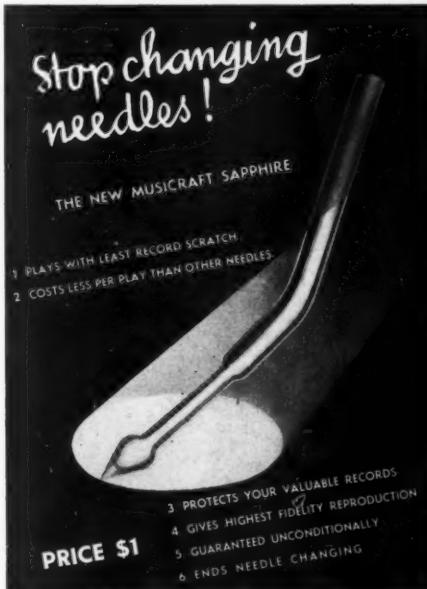
\*\*\*

MOZART: *Quartet No. 1, in G major, K. 80* (5 sides) and *Quartet No. 13, in D minor - Minuetto* (K. 173) (1 side); played by the Kreiner Quartet. Victor set M-393, price \$5.00.

■ The historical interest of this first of Mozart's long and distinguished line of string quartets is naturally tremendous. Every student of Mozart and every student of chamber music will be sure to want the recording. However, that host of less learned collectors, to whom a Mozart quartet means the perfection of musical grace, formal elegance and instrumental balance, had better be warned that in this early work they will find only some of these qualities, and those in an immature state. Having made up our minds to this point we can sit back and enjoy the music, and marvel that the first three movements are the work of a boy of fourteen. Naturally enough the quartet was produced under various influences, predominantly Italian, and the

authentic style of the composer was not fully formed in time for it. One of the most interesting things about the work is the way in which the last movement — composed eight years later — makes this fact clear. Beginning with an extended *Adagio* instead of the more usual *Allegro*, the original quartet has a spirited second movement and an appealingly simple *Minuet*. The immaturity of the music is apparent rather in the instrumental writing than in the thematic material, which has something of the genuine Mozartean distinction. The two violin parts are independently conceived, but the two lower instruments have little to do but fill in a background. This gives to the work a certain topheaviness which the casual listener is likely to blame upon the performers. The better balance of the final gavotte-like *Rondo* is immediately striking.

It is easy to forget, in judging a performance of such music as this, that it is far more difficult to render it effective than it is to play the most involved and portentous works in the literature of chamber music. It is necessary for the performers to catch not only the



At leading dealers  
MUSICRAFT RECORDS, Inc.  
10 West 47th Street New York City

naiveté of the youthful composition, but to strive as much as possible to cover up its imperfections of workmanship and balance. Under the circumstances it can be said that the Kreiners have given an adequate if not a transfiguring performance, generally at its most effective where Mozart was most effective — in the more spirited movements. And if there is a certain slight thinness in their tone, we may blame this on the otherwise satisfactory recording.

The odd side is given over to the *Minuet* from a somewhat later quartet. It is an unusually serious movement of its kind, and here it seems to me that the performers go just a little too far in emphasizing its seriousness. The *Minuet*, after all, is still a dance, even as it is idealized by Mozart, but the quartet seems not quite to realize this fact.

\*\*\*

**MOZART:** *Sonata in C major, K. 392; and Sonata in F major, K. 145*; played by Noëlie Pierront, organ, and orchestra conducted by Ruggiero Gerlin. Columbia disc, No. P-69625D, price \$1.50.

■ The recording of two of Mozart's "church sonatas" presents an interesting novelty, for the combination of the organ with the orchestra is a rather unusual one. And these are not organ concertos like those of Handel, but actually sonatas in which the organ merely forms a part of the ensemble. This, of course, is a difficult combination to write for, and I cannot honestly say that even Mozart has been altogether successful. The simple fact is that the organ does not blend too well with the orchestra, but presents a problem in intonation similar to that of the piano. The piano, however, being a percussion instrument, makes no attempt to blend, and it is therefore seldom used as a part of the ensemble. Even when it is its percussive qualities are its salvation. With the organ we are more conscious of the discrepancies. Added to this, of course, is the difficulty of recording the combination. This seems to me to have been done here about as well as we can expect to have it, for the balance is better than the blend. As for the music itself, it is not outstanding Mozart. It is full of echoes of other and better works of the master. Of course this composer was so thoroughly in command of his idiom and his technique that he seems to have been able to produce anything at any time. Here he has simply reached into his bag of tricks and pulled out music which would have been utterly charming if we had not heard it all be-

fore. The more attractive of the two sonatas, presented is K. 329, in which the larger orchestra is used (K. 145 is for strings only). Here, however, we are reminded of Gluck, and there is more than one suggestion of *Orfeo*. The artists responsible for the recording are too well known as high-minded and musicianly searchers after the unusual to need any comment here. If in this case they have resurrected music that is interesting rather than striking, they have presented a good case for it. It is curiously pleasant to be reminded occasionally that even Mozart had his weaker moments.

P. M.

## KEYBOARD

**DEBUSSY:** *First and Second Arabesques*; played by Walter Gieseking. Columbia 10-inch disc 1714D, price \$1.00.

■ Gieseking played these popular pieces, generally associated with piano students and conservatoires, a number of years ago on a 12-inch disc. Later, Mlle. Long recorded them on a 10-inch disc. From the standpoint of tonal clarity her disc was preferable to the early and much older one by Gieseking. There is no question today whose disc will be first in the affections of all record buyers, for no one seems quite to equal Gieseking in his exquisite tonal shading and atmosphere in the music of Debussy.

The two *Arabesques* date from Debussy's middle twenties. The first foreshadows effects that were to come in his later music, beginning with the beautiful and expressive *Clair de lune* a few years later. The second has been compared to the lighter moods of Schumann.

The reproduction here is comparable to the best that Columbia has given us.

P. H. R.

\*\*\*

**HARRIS:** *Sonata for Piano, Op. 1; and Children's Suite*; played by Johana Harris. Victor set M-568, two discs, price \$3.50.

■ Roy Harris has grown considerably in musical stature since his Opus 1. To us, the work seems definitely dated today. When it was written (1928), experimenting in piano sonorities was quite the vogue with contemporary composers. It was but natural at that time that Harris, an aspiring young composer, should have followed the vogue of his leading contemporaries. It was the custom with many composers during the decade and a half

as.  
or-  
k.  
of  
re-  
ed  
to  
ey  
ng  
a  
to  
rt

after the World War to write tricky things for a pianist's fingers: effects that were more or less interesting, but provided little inner gratification. Fortunately for modern music, composers of today are breaking away from this style of writing.

If one agrees with Paul Rosenfeld's contention that this work is more thoroughly consistent than any by Harris, it is very likely one will welcome its advent on records. Certainly the sonata has strength and individuality, and while one may justly feel that we have been surfeited by pieces of its style in the past two decades, one can readily understand how the work provoked much discussion in its day. As a matter of fact it heralded a notable American figure in music.

The sonata is in three connected movements in the published score, but the labels of the records divide it into only two. The Prelude and Andante ostinato are here given as one, and the Scherzo and Coda as the other. According to the composer, the prelude is "a study of chord line motifs in rhythmic groups of 2 alternated by 3 pulses"; the second movement "a variation study of 2 melodic types..."; the scherzo a fugal study and the coda a "dramatic development of the prelude".

The *Children's Suite* (1938), composed as a present for a young girl student, is an ingeniously written encore. Its fragmentary moods are sufficiently lovely to make one wish that the composer had extended them.

Although one gains the impression that more spontaneity in the performance of the sonata would have been to its advantage, one must admit that Mrs. Harris nevertheless does justice to her husband's music; her performances are distinguished by fine clarity and precision.

From the reproductive standpoint these compositions have been excellently handled. The tonal quality of the piano is good, and the bass has not been unduly attenuated to display the treble or so-called higher fidelity end of the scale.

P. G.

\* \* \*

**SCARLATTI: Sonatas (A collection of eleven);** played by Robert Casadesus. Columbia set M-372, three discs, price \$5.00.

■ From five hundred and more sonatas of Domenico Scarlatti the recorders have a wide choice, and so far — although this is the third set of them to appear in an album, to say nothing of the many individual recordings—the surface has barely been scratched. It may be said at once that the new collection is a par-

ticularly well-selected one, not only as it makes a rounded program of delightful music, but because it has for the most part avoided the more familiar of the sonatas. Of the eleven chosen by M. Casadesus only six seem to have been recorded electrically before, and surely only the two known as *La Chasse* and *Pastorale* could by any stretch be called well-known. We could narrow the previous recordings down still further by considering the "piano premieres," for perhaps no music changes color so completely as does that of Scarlatti when the piano takes the place of the harpsichord. And strangely enough it is equally effective on either instrument.

The sonatas included in the set, for those who know the Longo collection, are as follows: *D major*, L.465 (*La Chasse*), *E minor*, L.22; *G major*, L.486; *B minor* L.449; *G major*, L.387; *D minor*, L.413; *G major*, L.487; *D major* L.411; *B minor*, L.263; *D major* L.463; *A major*, L.395. There is no need at this time to try to describe the delights of this inexhaustible and ever novel music. As I have intimated above, this program is well calculated to give an idea of the variety of Scarlatti's music, and to blast the possible notion that the sonatas are all gay and charming tidbits. If I were trying to interest a novice in Scarlatti's music I would certainly give him this set.

Among the pianists who have recorded Scarlatti perhaps none but Myra Hess (whose single 10-inch side containing two little sonatas remains one of Columbia's best piano records) can equal the sensitive balance of delicacy and vitality that distinguishes the performance of Casadesus. Every sonata as he plays it is a gem in itself. Added to this he is given magnificent recording — easily among the finest examples of piano reproduction I have ever heard. I have no hesitation, then, in recommending this set without reservations.

P. M.

## VIOLIN

**SARASATE: Danses Espagnoles - Romanza Andaluza (No. 3), Op. 33, No. 1; Jota Navarra (No. 4), Op. 22, No. 2; Zapateado (No. 6), Op. 23, No. 2; and Adios Montanas (Celebre Zortzico), Op. 37;** played by Ossy Renardy with Walter Robert at the piano. Columbia set X-134, two discs, price \$3.50.

■ Pablo de Sarasate (1844-1908) was a celebrated violin-virtuoso. At the age of ten he played before Queen Isabella, who promptly presented him with a valuable Stradiva-

rius. From the start of his public career he was famous for his purity of style, the extraordinary beauty of his tone, his flexibility and his unusual facility. These attributes, mixed with plenty of force and passion, made him one of the outstanding virtuosos of his time. His native city of Pamplona, Spain, thought so highly of him that his annual visits were the occasion for a public festival.

It has been said that Sarasate's compositions owed their popularity to his own fascinating performance of them rather than to their intrinsic value. Almost all of them were founded upon Spanish folk material, the dance rhythms and patterns of his native land. Most of Sarasate's pieces are included in the repertoire of all great violinists. Full of a type of sentiment and melody dear to the hearts of most people, and rhythmically varied, they appeal to the majority of music lovers rather than to the few.

Maybe some of us have outgrown these pieces, but there are many who have not. The *Romanza Andaluza* recalled an old record for which I had a great fondness too many years ago to want to count them; the record was one made by Jan Kubelik. Both Menuhin and Hubermann have contributed recordings of this piece, but neither is as well balanced in reproduction as the present one, nor are they played any better. There was an old Polydor record of the *Jota Navarra*, but the performance was neither as smooth nor as well phrased as the present one. *Zapateado* (The Cobbler) is an old favorite. Heifetz and Zimbalist have records of it in domestic catalogues. The *Adios Montanos* is a first recording.

The young violinist, Renardy, has a purity of style and a flexibility here that would have delighted Sarasate, I feel certain. He does not overstress the sentiment of the music, which in some cases, as in *Adios Montanos*, would have been fatal. The recording does justice to the young player and the piano accompaniment is nicely balanced, particularly in the *Romanza*. It is a pity that Columbia did not see fit to supply a booklet with this set, for even though the music is popular, it is doubtful that many music lovers are familiar with relevant facts about the composer.

A slight crackling was noticed in a couple of sides of the recording; these may eliminate themselves in a second playing. Otherwise the surfaces are smooth.

P. H. R.

## VOCAL

BROWN (Arr.): *Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child* and BURLEIGH (Arr.): *I Don't Feel No-ways Tired*; sung by Marian Anderson, contralto, with piano accompaniment by Kosti Vehanen. Victor 10-inch disc, No. 1982, price \$1.50.

■ These are two splendid performances by one of the outstanding singers of the day. The songs are deeply felt and sincerely and simply projected. There is no attempt on the part of the artist to "put something into the music". Instead she does what every musician ought to do—she brings out what is there. No one who likes Negro spirituals will regret acquiring this record. It is too bad that Miss Anderson's voice has never been completely worked out, so as to eradicate the marring tremolo. This gives the singer a certain insecurity of attack that robs her renditions of the final triumphant quality that marks the greatest singers. As it is, one listener finds his full surrender hampered by a feeling of anxiety and a sense that Miss Anderson is uncomfortable at least some of the time.

A. W.

\* \* \*

DE FALLA: *Seguidilla Murciana* (No. 2 from *Siete Canciones Populares Españolas*) — JOAQUIN NIN: *Malagueña*; sung by Lucrezia Bori, soprano, assisted by George Copeland, pianist. Victor 10-inch disc, No. 1984, price \$1.50.

■ To the fine playing of George Copeland, Miss Bori sings with her complete understanding of their style, these charming Spanish songs. Although the voice records here for the large part nasal and somewhat shrill, it is not without the vitality and variety that have been characteristic of Lucrezia Bori throughout her career. Singers learning Spanish music would do well to study these records and to try to absorb the spirit that both artists have been able to realize. There is a very good balance between voice and piano in these recordings.

A. W.

\* \* \*

NEKRASSOFF - NEVSTROFF - MANIKIN: *Song of the Needy Pilgrim* and RUSSIAN FOLK SONG: *Arise, Red Sun*; sung by Feodor Chaliapin, basso, with the Afonsky Choir and Balalaika Orchestra. Victor 10-inch disc, No. 1983, price \$1.50.

■ The great basso put his personal stamp on everything he did. His manner, or shall we

say mannerisms, suffused and transformed all types of music into the same kind of outpouring of feeling, often regardless of musical values, but with an unmistakable note of genuineness that made the result uniquely rewarding. In these two compositions soloist and choir sing in alternation, with a surprising wealth of variety. In the *Song of the Needy Pilgrim* the balalaika orchestra and the choir fuse into particularly striking colors out of which the expressive voice of Chaliapin rises with compelling force even for one who does not understand Russian. This reviewer would have preferred a chaster, less theatrical enunciation of the solo parts, for the phrases are charming in their own right, but then it might not have been Chaliapin, and we should take our geniuses as they are, and be grateful.

A. W.

\* \* \*

GRETRY: *L'Amant Jaloux - Act II, Sérénade*; and PIERRE-LOUIS COUPERIN: *Dans cet asile solitaire* (In this lonely Abode); sung by Miguel Villabella, tenor, with orchestra in the Gretry conducted by C. Andolfi, and piano accompaniment in the Couperin played by Andolfi. Columbia disc, 10-inch, No. P-17144D, price \$1.00.

■ The Pathé Company in France is making a special attempt to record much of the older French music in the most authentic manner possible, and we have to thank them for some of the most delightful examples that have come to us on records. And we must also thank the Columbia Company in turn for repressing a number of these for American consumption. The singer on this disc will be favorably remembered as the tenor in the recent collection of Lully airs, and I am sure that anyone who took pleasure in that set will not find it necessary to listen to this disc before buying it.

The little *Sérénade* from *L'Amant Jaloux* reminds us again of the wealth of charming melody that is buried and all but forgotten among the works of Gretry. To be sure this is not an impressive example — there are arias of real dramatic power and sweep in some of the operas of this master — but it is a good beginning. A curious mystery in the labeling of this disc is the inclusion of the title of another of Gretry's operas, *Les événements imprévus*. The Couperin is another charming and typical romance of the classical French school.

Villabella is not gifted with an outstanding voice, but he has intelligence well above the average, and he is a musician. Aside from

## THE ORIGINAL AND STILL THE BEST

THE MUSIC LOVERS NEEDLE  
**BCN**

Non-Metallic  
PHONOGRAPH  
NEEDLES

If You Want - - -

- True Tone Quality
- No Scratch
- No Wear on Your Fine Records
- High Fidelity Reproduction

BUY B. C. N. NEEDLES

### RADIO PICK-UP

The perfect pick-up      Especially designed for  
needle.      Record Changers.

Package of 12 — 75c  
Package of 6 — 45c

Also B. C. N.'s own Needle Sharpener — obtains  
extra mileage from B. C. N. needles ..... \$1.50

From any good Record Dealer or from  
Sole Agent for U. S. A.

Read & Harding, 989 Sixth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

### EMERALD

an anticipated attack at the beginning of the Couperin, there is little fault to be found with his performances. The orchestra, including mandolin, which accompanies the Gretry, is curiously forward — a little too much so for the voice — and the deliberateness of its playing is thus emphasized. In the Couperin the balance leans a little the other way, for the piano accompaniment, well played by M. Andolfi, could be just a trifle more prominent.

P. M.

## RECORDER

CARL F. DOLMETSCH: *Theme and Variations in A minor*, for Descant Recorder and harpsichord; played by Carl F. Dolmetsch and Joseph Saxby. R.R. 10-inch disc No. 16.

LECLAIR: *Two Minuets in E minor*; and PURCELL: *Chaconne in F major*; played on Descant and Treble Recorders respectively by Carl F. Dolmetsch with Joseph Saxby at the harpsichord. D.R. 10-inch disc No.

WANTED: Will pay good price for record of opening chorus of Bach St. John Passion. John Schaus. Tait Plate Glass Company. Kitchener, Ontario, Canada.

16. (Imported by International Records Agency).

■ The Dolmetsch family, under the guidance of the father, have done much for the revival of interest in the old instruments. Since their "rediscovery" of the recorder (English flute) this singularly pure-toned instrument (in the hands of a capable player only) has won increasing popularity. Unfortunately not all recorders, sold as such, have the quality of tone of those that the Dolmetschs make. They have succeeded in producing some highly regarded instruments.

These two discs serve to introduce the artistry of Carl F., a son of Arnold Dolmetsch, and an accomplished performer on the recorder. His performance in his own *Theme and Variations*, a most attractive composition in the 18th-century style, is a true display of virtuosity. Although technically less imposing the Purcell and Leclair pieces are nonetheless engaging. The treble recorder has a tone similar to a cross between a refined whistle and a metal flute—quite mellow and fluent. The descant recorder, a larger instrument, has the characteristics of both our modern flute and clarinet. Mr. Dolmetsch is appropriately and competently accompanied by a harpsichord in his selections here. The reproduction is satisfactory, although the record surfaces are not of the smoothest variety.

P. G.

#### OTHER RECORDINGS

BISHOP: *Home, Sweet Home*; and BARNBY *Sweet and Low*; Joe Green, chimes. Victor disc 26276, 10-inch, price 75c.

DELIBES (Arr. Beale): *Naila - Intermezzo - Wilzaz*; and DRDLA (Arr. Beale); *Guitarro*; The Aeolians (violin, flute, cello and harp). Victor disc 12449, price \$1.50.

GERSHWIN: *Concerto in F major* (Piano and orchestra); Roy Bargy and Paul Whiteman and his Concert Orchestra. Decca set 57, two discs, \$2.50.

MACDOWELL: *To a Wild Rose*; and *To a Water Lily*; Lew White, organ solos. Victor 26275, 10-inch, price 75c.

MANNA-ZUCCA: *I Love Life*; and SPEAKS: *My Homeland*; John Charles Thomas. Victor disc 1986, 10-inch, price \$1.50.

QUINCEY PORTER: *Suite for Viola Alone*; played by the composer. New Music Quarterly disc No. 1512.

HERBERT: *I'm Falling in Love with Someone*, and *Thine Alone*; sung by Charles Kullman. Columbia 10-inch disc 1741D, price \$1.00.

KALMAN: *Play Gypsy Play*; and LENOL: *Speak to Me of Love*; Albert Sandler and his Orchestra. Columbia 10-inch disc 420-M, price 75c.

SAINT-SAENS: *The Swan*; and ALETTER: *Rendezvous*; Mario Lorenzi (Harp) and Sidney Torch (Organ). Columbia 10-inch disc 418-M, price 75c.

TRENET: *La Route enchantée*, and *Il pleut dans ma chambre*, from the film *La Route enchantée*; sung by Charles Trenet with Orch. Columbia 10-inch disc 419-M, price 75c.

#### TYNAYRE IN U. S.

The Lumen Record Co. of Paris recently announced that M. Yves Tinayre, whose recordings of *Seven Centuries of Sacred Music* (listed on pages 18, 19 and 20 of its general catalogue) have won considerable success in France, will visit in the United States for about a year. M. Tinayre plans to give many concerts with programs largely chosen from his recording material.

#### TECHNICAL TOPICS

(Continued from page 132)

2. The needle point should fall something between a quarter and half an inch *beyond* the spindle. Because of the geometry of the off-set head, it loses its alignment very sharply as it gets near the spindle, so that with the line-up you describe, it tracks exceedingly poorly near the inside of the record. This will cause not only distortion, but excessive wear.

3. I should certainly advise you to move your pickup. The cost of cutting a hole in your motor-board should certainly not be very great, or else your serviceman is hiking his charge somewhat. An ordinary breast-drill and small drill would do the job, I believe, and perhaps you have a friend with such tools.

4. You have evidently counteracted the tracking error of the pickup somewhat by the method you use in aligning a Walco needle. I believe that you will reduce wear considerably by having your pickup moved, and then lining up the needle as directed by the members.

5. I think your excessive surface noise arises from the improper input circuit into which the crystal is working. A low-impedance lead emphasizes the high frequencies very sharply, so that the surface of the record would be at a very high level. If the input of the amplifier is rearranged as described, I believe that your tone control will take care of surface noise.

SAZ please write me as to how these matters work out, as I am especially interested in the case-history of such problems.

Sincerely,  
Robert S. Lanier.

## Correspondence

To the Editor:—

Lanier's latest article was as fine as its predecessor. I note you are listing foreign releases more extensively now. To me, this seems a good policy.

However, you should omit from your foreign listings all double-letter Deccas. These are British pressings of German Polydors and are for sale in Great Britain only. All British jobbers and dealers are forbidden to export them, and while it may be possible to sneak them out now and then, to do so entails a breach of the contracts between the companies and their dealers, and is a violation of the British law that fortifies the agreements.

Apart from that, I think you should tell your readers that under Section 526 of the Tariff Act of 190 it is illegal for anyone to undertake the direct importation of records bearing the Victor dog trademark, be they H.M.V.'s, German Gramophone or regular Victor's, or records bearing the Columbia "Magic Notes" trademark, or of records bearing the Decca label. The Vocalion and Brunswick are believed to be similarly protected, and the Electrola name may be also. As the law reads, a single record of a protected brand in a shipment of records subject to no restrictions contaminates the entire shipment and may result in the seizure of the whole package by the customs authorities. Failing to obtain a consent from the owner of the infringed trademark, the consignee will have to suffer the destruction of the entire shipment at the hands of the authorities.

Having trademarks masked is usually ineffectual as the authorities lift the marks to ascertain the identity of the brand. The vigilance of the authorities at all ports of entry has been stimulated in recent months.

As numerous readers of the AML patronize or are tempted to patronize foreign retailers, your printing this may save them considerable anxiety, inconvenience and possible loss. Records of the brands mentioned may be obtained *legally* through their regular domestic dealers in Victor, Columbia, Decca and allied brands of records.

Sincerely yours,  
A. J. Frank

Richmond Hill, N. Y.

## Record Buyers' Guide

OF THE NATION'S MOST RELIABLE DEALERS

LOS ANGELES, California  
Birkel-Richardson Co.  
730 West 7th Street

LOS ANGELES, California  
Gateway to Music  
3305 Wilshire Boulevard

SAN FRANCISCO, California  
Sherman, Clay & Co.  
Kearney and Sutter Streets

CHICAGO, Illinois  
Cable Piano Company  
Wabash and Jackson

CHICAGO, Illinois  
Lyon & Healy  
Wabash at Jackson Boulevard

INDIANAPOLIS, Indiana  
L. S. Ayres & Co.  
1-15 Washington Street

INDIANAPOLIS, Indiana  
Pearson Co., Inc.  
128 N. Pennsylvania Street

BALTIMORE, Maryland  
The G. Fred Kranz Music Co.  
327 North Charles Street

BOSTON, Massachusetts  
The Boston Music Company  
116 Boylston Street

BOSTON, Massachusetts  
M. Steinert & Sons  
162 Boylston Street  
Worcester Springfield

CAMBRIDGE, Massachusetts  
Briggs and Briggs  
1270 Massachusetts Avenue

MINNEAPOLIS, Minnesota  
Paul A. Schmitt Music Co.  
77 South 8th Street

KANSAS CITY, Missouri  
Jenkins Music Co.  
1217 Walnut Street

(Continued on page 153)

# SWING MUSIC NOTES

ENZO ARCHETTI

■ This is the time of the year when jazz in the Big City is ordinarily very much at a standstill. The night spots are closed, the bands are on the road or at resorts, the shows take on lighter fare, and good records are few and far between. But the World's Fair has changed all that. The City is swarming with new faces: people who have come for miles and miles ostensibly to see the Fair but actually more interested in the City and the excitement it has to offer.

Broadway is filled with substantial shows coupled with big name band representatives. Swing Lane, that fascinating piece of West 52nd Street, is as wide open and humming as if it were the middle of winter. The record supplements are rich in good things, and the recording studios keep going, heat or no heat.

Count Basie and his band are at the Famous Door for an indefinite stay. This is a band that gets more unified as the days pass. It is a most satisfying band because its lapses are few. Its records, too, show a perfection of style which they had never quite achieved before . . . McKinley has left Jimmy Dorsey to form his own band with the cooperation of a legit trombone man who up to now was with the various N.B.C. studio orchestras. This trombone player is said to have all the style and polish of Tommy Dorsey, plus a prodigious technique . . . Dave Tough was expected to take McKinley's place in the J. D. outfit but Buddy Schultz did instead . . . Those who have been listening in on the Benny Goodman broadcasts lately have surely noted that no mention is made any more of Jess Stacey and that Fletcher Henderson is now openly featured. Rumor has it that Jess has left Goodman, an amicable separation, it is said, to satisfy a desire on Jess' part to glory in the well deserved limelight, and possibly to form his own orchestra. If this be true, Goodman has lost one of his best men, though the substitution of Henderson will by no means affect the quality of the band. But the fact remains that Stacey is probably the best White pianist in jazz today and he fitted nicely in the Goodman make-up. Since the separation, Stacey has been East and has recorded some

new works for an independent label.

The band-creating fever seems to have spread. Both Joe Marsala and Bob Zurke are said to be hit . . . The Windy City Seven, which made its name under the Commodore banner, is now at Nic's in the Village... What's the matter with Bunny? He is not sounding like his old self lately... The annual Metronome popularity contest has ended with its usual number of surprises and upsets, proving again the fickleness of the listening public. Only in one instance was any constancy shown: Benny Goodman was again named King of Swing by popular consent. Artie Shaw came second, having jumped up from fourth place last year. Tommy Dorsey finished third, relinquishing his last year's position to Artie Shaw. In many other cases there were some bad setbacks. For instance, Duke Ellington dropped from fifth to tenth place, which proves once more that his greatness is not yet understood or appreciated: Bunny Berigan, from thirteenth to twenty-second place—which is not too surprising, judging by his recent work; and Jimmy Lunceford from seventh to ninth place, which, no doubt, means that his fine band is also not appreciated properly. But it is gratifying to see Count Basie rise from tenth to sixth place. All is not wrong with the voters' judgment. Incidentally, this voting was not by the general public, so the inconstant fan was not allowed to do his worst. This voting was done by people who are supposed to know, musicians and such . . . Joe Sullivan has returned to Bob Crosby's orchestra after a long absence due to illness. From now on this band will carry two pianists. Other changes in this band include the replacement of Jimmy Emmert on trombone by Ray Coniff, whose work with Bunny Berigan showed up brilliantly . . . Hymie Shertzer has left Benny Goodman to return to Tommy Dorsey. Toots Mondello replaces Hymie . . .

Blue Note announces a new disc to be available about August 1st. It is a piano solo record by Earl "Father" Hines, the first solo recording made of him in years. This disc, which will be release No. 5, will be a twelve-inch containing *The Father's Getaway* and *Reminiscing at Blue Note*. It will be reviewed in this column as soon as it is received. In the meantime, release No. 4 is at hand:

*Chicago in Mind* — Piano solo by Albert Ammons.

Blue Note No. 4, 12-inch; price \$1.50.

*Chicago in Mind* is a surprise, coming from Ammons. One had become so accustomed to associating him with boogie woogie playing

said he was never expected to play anything else. *Chicago in Mind* is certainly something else." It is a slow blues, a free and easy improvisation in a distinctly Chicago style, but not without its echoes of the boogie woogie. In fact, sometimes it sounds very much like boogie woogie slowed down to an extremely slow pace. The bass is very prominent, giving the whole work a slightly top heavy sound. But the ideas are good and therefore we have good jazz.

*Twos and Fours* is a faster number, not boogie woogie but occasionally suggesting it. The styles of the two pianists blend remarkably well; so well, that it is difficult to tell just who is playing what. The theme is good; the improvisations are interesting. Both sides swing mightily.

But, frankly, I prefer their boogie playing because I feel they are more at home with it. And I suspect that the sponsors of Blue Note also think so because although this was the first recording made by them, they waited until now to issue it, after three other excellent discs had paved the way and set a standard. In fact, that standard has been set very high and they will have to work very hard to live up to it. No. 4 does not quite make the grade according to their own high standards but it is still a remarkably fine disc because it contains real jazz.

Two new brands of records have recently thrown their hats into the ring, to bid for the favor of the jazz enthusiasts. The first, Solo-Art, has already made a series of recordings by Albert Ammons and Meade "Lux" Lewis but they are not yet ready for release. More about these later. The second, as yet unnamed, is sponsored by the venerable publishing house of G. Schirmer, Inc. Since this is Schirmer's first venture in the recording field, they do not feel that their first release should bear their honorable name since the disc is a "hot" one. Frankly, I do not see why not. It is not a record to be ashamed of at all.

*My Last Affair* (Haven Johnson); and *Love Fell In* (Ralph Blane); both sung by Billie Haywood, assisted and accompanied at the piano by Cliff Allen. Record No. 501.

This team is the typical night club entertainment type: singer plus accompanist who plays and jives. Both are Negroes and they have personality. Billie Haywood has a good voice whose timbre seems very suitable for true blue singing. Cliff Allen has a facile style somewhat reminiscent of Bob Howard. On this record neither artist does anything to

## Record Buyers' Guide

(Continued from page 151)

ST. LOUIS, Missouri  
Aeolian Company of Missouri  
1004 Olive Street

NEW YORK CITY  
Bloomfield's Music Store  
118 East 14th Street

NEW YORK CITY  
Center Music Store  
RCA Bldg., Rockefeller Center

NEW YORK CITY  
The Elaine Music Shop  
8 East 46th Street (one flight up)

NEW YORK CITY  
Mortimer H. Fogel  
118 Liberty Street

NEW YORK CITY  
The Gramophone Shop  
18 East 48th Street

NEW YORK CITY  
Haynes - Griffin  
373 Madison Avenue, at 46th St.

NEW YORK CITY  
Liberty Music Shop  
450 Madison Avenue, at 50th St.

NEW YORK CITY  
National Music Shop  
220 West 23rd Street

NEW YORK CITY  
New York Band Instrument Co.  
111 East 14th Street  
1166 Sixth Avenue  
Brooklyn . . . 25 Flatbush Avenue

NEW YORK CITY  
Rabson's Record Shop  
100 West 56th Street

NEW YORK CITY  
G. Schirmer, Inc.  
3 East 43rd Street

NEW YORK CITY  
Harry Sultan's Record Shop  
26 East 23rd Street

NEW YORK CITY  
Sun Radio Company  
212 Fulton Street

NEW YORK CITY  
Vesey Music Shop  
50 Church Street

(Continued on page 155)

burn down the town but both do a good job. I have heard of neither one before this.

*My Last Affair* begins as a rather dull, straight version. The second chorus swings slightly better but the piano part is messy. After some comic dialogue, the third chorus swings much better but still it is all on a very mild scale.

*Love Fell In* is partly solo and partly duet, in a blues manner. This, too, begins as a straight solo, the piano part swinging mildly. There are comments and jive as on the reverse and the swing gets better during the duet sections.

Strictly speaking, neither side is really good hot music. Both are good entertainment of a familiar type but neither side swings enough to excite anyone beyond a mild interest. Yet both artists seem to possess abilities which could show up to much better advantage. I should like to hear them do a traditional blues in the real blues style. That would be the acid test. It is unfair to judge their ability entirely by this record.

The recording is excellent and the piano tone is most realistic. The surfaces are quiet enough to compare with the best available today.

## In the Popular Vein

Horace Van Norman

AAAA—*Undertow*, and *Pickin' for Patsy*. Jack Teagarden and his Orchestra. Brunswick 8401.

■ *Pickin' for Patsy* is an extremely fetching novelty number built around the very considerable talent of Allan Reuss, Teagarden's ace guitarist. Long known as one of the foremost exponents of his instrument through his work with Goodman and other front rank bands, this is the first time that I can recall his ever having an opportunity to show what he could do on a record; and from the evidence of this disc, what he can do is plenty. The band blends nicely with the solo instrument and once more, as on its previous discs, proves itself one of the definitely coming outfits.

AAAA—*Comes Love*, and *A Boy Named Lem*. Larry Clinton and his Orchestra. Victor 26277.

■ These two are both from the current musical, *Yokel Boy*, and are the product of the combined talents of its producer, the lyric-

# THE FRIENDS OF RECORDED MUSIC

A Society Sponsored by

THE AMERICAN MUSIC LOVER

■ The records issued by this society can be procured through all music stores. Membership in the society costs \$2.75 a year, and includes a subscription to the magazine. It permits the member to purchase his records at \$1.75 either direct from the society or through his own dealer, instead of \$2.00 which is the price of the records to non-members. Postage will be charged on all orders under \$10.00.

FRANCAIX: *Sonatine* (1934). Disc 25. Played by Josef Gingold (violin) and Liza Elman (piano).

BUSONI: *Sonatina (ad usum infantis)*. Disc 23.

BUSONI: *Sonatina (In Diem Nativitatis Christi MVMXVII)*. Disc 24.

Both played by Michael Zadora

SCRIABINE: *Piano Sonata No. 4 in F sharp major, Opus 30*. Katherine Ruth Heyman. Disc 20.

CLEMENTI: *Piano Sonata in B flat Major, Opus 47, No. 2* (3 sides); HAESSLER: *Grande Gigue* (1 side); Arthur Loesser. Discs 21-22.

HAYDN: *Sonata in F major (No. 20 in Peter's Edition)*. Arthur Loesser. Disc 19.

BRAHMS: *Piano Sonata No. 2 in F sharp minor, Opus 2*. Arthur Loesser. Discs 15, 16 and 17.

CLEMENTI: *Piano Sonata in G minor, Op. 50, No. 3 (Didone Abbandone)*. Arthur Loesser. Discs 13 and 14.

CHARLES T. GRIFFES: *Piano Sonata*. Harrison Potter. Discs 10 and 11.

ERNEST BLOCH: *Five Sketches in Sepia*. Harrison Potter. Disc 12.

BOCCHERINI: *String Quartet in A major, Opus 33, No. 6*.

Played by Kreiner Quartet. Discs 1 and 2

Advisory Board for The Friends of Recorded Music

CARL ENGEL — LEE PATTISON  
ALBERT STOESSEL

CARLETON SPRAGUE SMITH

If your dealer does not have any of the above records, arrangements can be made to hear any of them in which you are interested by writing to THE AMERICAN MUSIC LOVER, 12 East 22nd Street, New York City.

writing Lew Brown, Charlie Tobias and Sammy Stept. If these are not exactly the most lustrous names that Tin Pan Alley can boast of, they at least are capable of turning out a workmanlike job of song-carpentering, and *Comes Love* is likely to be one of summer's bigger numbers. (Its success will not be rendered any the less improbable by its very striking resemblance to *Fiesta*, of few years back). Clinton marks his return to the Victor fold, after a few months of sulking in his tent, by a thoroughly first rate job on this strong number. A hard-driving arrangement, with a characteristically apoplectic vocal by Ford Leary, makes it something to listen to at least once.

AAA—*Well All Right*, and *All I Remember is You*. Tommy Dorsey and his Orchestra. Victor 26281.

■ They haven't done a bad job of building a song on Fats Waller's stentorian exclamation, "Well All Right." The *chef d'oeuvre* of the Andrews Sisters for these many months, it appears to equally good advantage in a good solid orchestral presentation of this kind. *All I Remember is You*, like most Jimmy Van Heusen tunes, will probably sneak up on you while you're looking the other way, which is one of the nicest things anyone can say about a tune, and Tommy does a luxuriant job on it.

AAA—*I'm Sorry for Myself*, and *Stand By for Further Announcements*. Kay Kyser and his Orchestra. Brunswick 8392.

■ *I'm Sorry for Myself* is from the Berlin musical film, *Second Fiddle*, and if it is even more undistinguished melodically than the other numbers from the picture (which boasts one of the poorest Berlin scores within recent years), it has rather amusing lyrics and a nice lilt to it, withal. Kyser does a smooth but spirited job on it as well as the reverse, which reminds one of at least five other numbers within the past decade. This particular tune has been used so frequently, in fact, that it may now be said to be in the public domain, ready at hand for use by desperate songwriters in search of a melody. Kyser's presentation features, among other things, a rather amusing imitation of Our President for the customary "sung" announcement in the introduction.

AAA—*Beer Barrel Polka*, and *Hot Pretzels*. Glahe's Musette Orchestra. Victor V-710.

■ Something decidedly novel in the way of big hits is the current Hit Parade leader, *Beer Barrel Polka*. As corny a piece of liverwurst as was ever heard on land or sea, its sheer

## Record Buyers' Guide

(Continued from page 153)

### RICHMOND HILL, N. Y.

International Records Agency  
P. O. Box 171 (Mail orders only)

### CINCINNATI, Ohio

The Willis Music Co.  
137 West 4th Street

### CLEVELAND, Ohio

G. Schirmer Music Co.  
43-45 The Arcade

### PHILADELPHIA, Pa.

H. Royer Smith Co.  
10th and Walnut Streets

### PHILADELPHIA, Pa.

The Record Shop  
247 South 15th Street

### PITTSBURGH, Pa.

C. C. Mellor Co.  
604 Wood Street

### CHARLESTON, W. Va.

Galparin Music Co.  
17 Capitol Street

### MILWAUKEE, Wis.

Helen Gunnis Record Shop  
226 East Mason Street

### LONDON, W. C. 2, England

Rimington, Van Wyck, Ltd.  
42/43 Cranbourn Street

All shops listed in the Record Buyers' Guide are fully endorsed by The AMERICAN MUSIC LOVER and are equipped to take excellent care of your record requirements.

## The Gramophone

Edited by

COMPTON MACKENZIE and  
CHRISTOPHER STONE

—an independent magazine devoted to the interest of the gramophone user.

—reviews month by month every record issued by the British companies.

—contains literary contributions, biographies, translations and technical articles.

Annual Subscription \$3.50

Write for a Specimen Copy

10a, Soho Square, London, W. 1.  
England

corniness is, of course, its principal charm. And this is the most excruciatingly corny recording of it to appear so far. A typical bal musette band, with a few saxes added for good measure, Herr Glahe and the boys ride with this one in no uncertain manner, if mighty bumpily.

AAA—*If I Didn't Care*, and *Blue Evening*. Jack Marshard and his Orchestra. Brunswick 8374.

■ One of the most popular of the recently crop of non-swing bands, is the Jack Marshard combine. While being rather heavily imitative of Duchin, like most "society" bands, with its sugary tone and cascading octaves in the piano, it possesses slightly more ingenious arrangements than Duchin and has handled the surprisingly heavy assignments given it by Brunswick in thoroughly competent fashion. *If I Didn't Care* is an effective bit of songwriting, pleasing if highly unoriginal, and writer Jack Lawrence probably has one of the big hits of the year on his hands.

AAA—*The Lamp Is Low*, and *The Tinkle Song*. Kay Kyser and his Orchestra. Brunswick 8377.

■ *The Lamp Is Low* is an adaptation of a portion of Ravel's *Pavane for a Dead Princess*, although its "composers" did not deign to mention the fact on the label. It turns out moderately effectively and Kyser's restrained, almost subdued, performance is curiously in key with the piece's original character. The reverse is an obvious, though I am sure unsuccessful, attempt to follow up on the popularity of the *Lambeth Walk*, being another one of those communal things, with printed instructions as to what to do when, etc. You can seldom ring the bell twice with a thing of this sort, but that doesn't stop the boys from trying.

AAA—*Mood Indigo*, and *Solitude*. Reginald Foresythe and Arthur Young. Victor 25224.

■ These are highly ingenious, if somewhat mannered, arrangements for two pianos (presumably the work of Foresythe) of Ellington's classics. Both numbers are so completely orchestral in conception that no piano performance, regardless of its excellence, can possibly hope to be entirely satisfying, but Foresythe's work always bears thoughtful consideration, and his piquant harmonizations make this a record to be heard.

AAA—*Barber's Hitch*, and *Capriciousness No. 24*. New Friends of Rhythm. Victor 26256.

■ More highly skillful stuff by the string

quartet that swings. Rather mild swing it is, to be sure, but pleasing indeed to those who don't demand that their ear drums be blasted in order to enjoy a bit of dance music. These do not begin to have the appeal of their first release, which leads one again to the conclusion that you can't swing just anything, especially the Overture to *Nozze di Figaro* or Paganini's 24th Caprice. But still it's all very enjoyable and the superb musicianship that goes into the arrangements makes up for its somewhat stilted rhythmic qualities.

AAA—*The Moon and I*, and *A Wandering Minstrel*. Kenny Baker. Victor 26252.

■ One of the really enjoyable voices of the radio, Kenny Baker here sings two of the numbers from the British-made film version of *Mikado*, in which he starred. It's been a long time since these too-familiar airs have been heard as well sung as they are here. Baker unquestionably has an exceptional organ which he uses with the utmost freedom and assurance. If his phrasing is occasionally a bit naive, it does not greatly mar the general effectiveness of his grand work.

#### OTHER CURRENT POPULAR RECORDINGS OF MERIT

(The following are rated from quality of performance regardless of record quality.)

AAA—*Black Beauty*, and *Night Song*. Cootie Williams & his Rug Cutters. Vocalion 4958.

AAA—*Ebony Rhapsody*, and *Lament for a Lost Love*. Charlie Barnet and his Orchestra. Bluebird B-10341.

AAA—*Dance of the Goon*, and *Hometown Blues*. Johnny Hodges and his Orchestra. Vocalion 4941.

AAA—*Pick Your Own Lick*, and *Don't Try Your Jive On Me*. Edgar Sampson and his Orchestra. Vocalion 4942.

AAA—*All I Remember Is You*, and *Octaroon*. Artie Shaw and his Orchestra. Bluebird B-10319.

AAA—*Guess I'll Go Back Home This Summer*, and *Slip Horn Jive*. Glenn Miller. Bluebird B-10317.

AA—*You're Mine, You!* and *Zaggin' with Zig*. Ziggy Elman and his Orchestra. Bluebird B-10317.

AA—*Ridin' and Jivin'* and *Grand Terrace Rhythm*. Earl Hines and his Orchestra. Bluebird B-10351.

AA—*You Meet the Nicest People in Your Dreams*, and *Honey Hush*. "Fats" Waller and his Rhythm. Bluebird B-10346.

# The Readers' Library Service of The AMERICAN MUSIC LOVER

To our readers we offer any one of these fine books, indispensable to a comprehensive home music library, together with a YEAR'S SUBSCRIPTION to the magazine at a SPECIAL COMBINATION PRICE.

<b>Beethoven, The Creator</b> , by Romain Rolland. Translated by Ernest Newman.	\$1.69
Formerly \$5.00. Now only	\$1.69
<b>Stories of the Great Operas</b> (3 Volumes in One); by Ernest Newman.	\$1.59
Formerly \$10.00. Now only	\$1.59
<b>Wagner, As Man and Artist</b> , by Ernest Newman. Form. \$2.50. Now only	\$1.49
<b>Stories of Symphonic Music</b> , by Lawrence Gilman.	
Formerly \$2.50. Now only	\$1.00
<b>Great Works of Music</b> , by Philip H. Goepp. Formerly \$10.00. Now only	\$1.69
<b>Music on the Air</b> , Compiled and Edited by Hazel Gertrude Kinsella.	
Formerly \$3.50. Now only	\$1.79
<b>Richard Wagner — My Life</b> . The complete authorized edition of the revelatory autobiography of this musical genius. Two volumes in one; originally \$5.00	
Now only	\$1.89
<b>Brahms</b> , by Walter Niemann. The finest study of Brahms the man, and the best criticism of his great musical works. Originally \$3.00. Now only	\$1.39
<b>How To Understand Music</b> , by Oscar Thompson. A practical introduction to music. Does not try to teach the rudiments of music but treats it from the viewpoint of the layman. Originally \$2.75. Now only	\$1.29
<b>The Book of Musical Knowledge</b> , by Arthur Elson. As complete as any encyclopedia, as readable as any novel. History, technique and appreciation of music . . . profusely illustrated. Originally \$5.00. Now only	\$1.89
<b>Beethoven</b> , by Robert Haven Shauffler. A noteworthy biography of the man who freed music. A book that should be in every music lover's library.	
Originally \$10.00. Now only	\$1.69
<b>Symphony Masterpieces</b> , by Olin Downes. The distinguished music critic of the New York Times writes on symphonic music in his own inimitable manner. Another book that every music lover should own.	
Originally \$2.75. Now only	\$1.29
<b>Tovey's Essays in Musical Analysis</b> . Four Volumes. Each	\$4.00
Vol. 1 - Symphonies Vol. 2 - Symphonies, Variations and Orchestra Polyphony.	
Vol. 3 - Concertos. Vol. 4 - Illustrative Music.	

Just add the price of the book or books you want and the regular yearly subscription of \$2.50 to the magazine . . . . .

**THEN DEDUCT 20%**

Subscribers who have already sent in their subscription and wish any of the books may procure them by communicating with the BOOK DEPARTMENT, care of

**THE AMERICAN MUSIC LOVER**

12 EAST 22nd STREET

—:—

NEW YORK CITY

## Monthly Auction Sheets of Rare, Cut-Out Recordings

Subscription Yearly ..... 25 Cents

Also a special list of cut-out vocal selections at direct sale is available. Artists include the biggest names. Records are priced at 35c, 50c, and 75c. A free copy sent upon request. Please include a self-addressed stamped envelope.

We are prepared to sell at reasonable commission rare vocal records and old catalogues. Write address below.

Discontinued IRCC and HRS releases are carried in stock, and there remain a few copies of THE RECORD COLLECTORS' GUIDE, price \$1, postpaid.

The AMERICAN  
RECORD COLLECTORS' EXCHANGE  
235 EAST 51st STREET

NEW YORK, N. Y.

## A New Way to Keep



YOUR  
MAGAZINES  
as a  
REFERENCE  
BOOK

To meet the desire of our readers for a method of preserving copies of magazines, we offer this new PERIODICAL binder. Simple to use, just a snap and the magazine is filed, any copy can be removed or inserted without disturbing the others. A handsomely grained, gold embossed, strongly constructed, full metal-back binder that is a really fine addition to any desk or library table.

SENT POSTPAID IN THE U. S. FOR \$1.35

THE AMERICAN MUSIC LOVER  
12 East 22nd Street

New York, N. Y.

## THE MUSICAL QUARTERLY

\$3.00 a Year

CARL ENGEL, Editor

75c a Copy

July, 1939

Volume XXV, No. 3

JOHN KNOWLES PAINE	M. A. DeWolfe Howe (Boston)
VICTOR HARTMANN AND MODESTE MUSORGSKY	Alfred Frankenstein (San Francisco)
ORIGINS OF THE LYRIC THEATRE IN SPAIN	Gilbert Chase (New York)
THE HIGH LIGHTS OF FRENCH OPERA COMIQUE	Maurice Cauchie (Paris)
THE "HOWLING SECONDS" OF THE LOMBARDS	Ernest Ferand (New York)
CARNIVAL SONGS AND THE ORIGINS OF THE INTERMEZZO GIOCOSO	Federico Ghisi (Florence)
GUSTAVE CHARPENTIER	Kathleen O'Donnell Hoover (New York)
AIRS FROM A PYRENEAN VALLEY	Violet Alford (Bristol, England)
CURRENT CHRONICLE	Paul Rosenfeld (New York)

### QUARTERLY BOOK-LIST

### IEWS AND REVIEWS

### QUARTERLY RECORD-LIST

"By far the most important of the American periodicals from the point of view of musical scholarship is the *Musical Quarterly*. It is a serious review, cosmopolitan in character, and has published valuable contributions from most of the leading writers of music in Europe and America."

—*Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*

Published By

G. SCHIRMER, Inc.

3 East 43rd Street, New York City

0

S

ng  
r.  
oy  
A  
all  
se

Y.